



Autumn
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Mouth of the River

Publication of Oyster River High School



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Dear Reader,

We are stoked to be presenting our first issue of Mouth of the River for the 2022-2023 school year! MOR has a phenomenal staff this year who are sure to write amazing stories for the magazine all year long. We are proud to work alongside these writers to bring you the best coverage of the Oyster River community.

Our cover image reflects the focus on school policy throughout this issue. Oyster River has altered many of its rules and customs, which has resulted in some strong reactions from the student body. MOR writers chose to highlight these changes and responses, as well as bring clarity to what exactly is being changed. Our back cover also features some references to other articles throughout the issue... can you spot them?

This issue includes articles like Justin Partis' "The Not So New Tech Policy," which focuses on the use of personal electronic devices at school and Abby Owens' "Learning from the Past" about the new holocaust and genocide curriculum requirement in schools. It also has more lighthearted stories, like Grace Webb's "Keeping up with the Klassrooms" on different classroom environments. Once you read the magazine, make sure you also check out some of our video and online articles at mor.news!

We want to thank all our wonderful sponsors who help us fund our publication. Without support from the local businesses in our community, we wouldn't be able to do all the great things we do for our magazine. If you're interested in becoming a sponsor for Mouth of the River for our other upcoming issues, contact us at mor@orcisd.org.

Yours truly,

Libby Davidson, Tess Brown, and Zoe Selig

Meet the Staff

Curated by Hazel Stasko



Tess Brown (she/her) ('23)
Co-Editor in Chief

Tess Brown joined the magazine to become a voice for everyone so that they feel like they're being equally represented. She is passionate about her friends and schoolwork. Tess works towards building a good career for herself so that she is successful but happy. She has a scary, scruffy, 18-year-old stuffed-animal dog named Ega, and claims that Ega's survival should be counted as a special skill.



Libby Davidson (she/her) ('23)
Co-Editor in Chief

Libby Davidson joined MOR last year and continued this year because of the newsroom environment the class offers and because she loves to learn about the interests of Oyster River High School. She has been swimming competitively since she was seven years old. An essential part of her swimming team, she has taken the responsibility of creating playlists for her team to rock out to. If Fergalicious happens to cycle through, fear not, because Libby can rap all the lyrics.



Zoe Selig (she/her) ('23)
Co-Editor in Chief

Zoe Selig chose to take MOR for her second year because she loves the process of hearing a story, learning about it, and then sharing it with the Oyster River community. Zoe is passionate about activism and theater. She is a member of the Justice, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion club and a stage manager for the Oyster River High School theater department. Zoe has no special talents and claims she is a totally normal human girl.



Micah Bessette (he/him) ('24)
Media Editor

Micah Bessette has been taking photographs since seventh grade, and one of his favorite activities is to capture the beauty of the world. As Media Editor, he takes what he has learned from his passion and applies it to his job by editing and taking photos for the magazine. Photography is not his only love. Growing up around music, he loves to sing, play the electric bass, viola, ukulele, and even plays a little piano and harmonica. When he is not taking pictures or playing his long list of instruments, Micah is catching food in his mouth. Creepily good, he can catch a piece of food from almost any height or distance.



Mia Boyd (she/her) ('24)
Subscriptions & Distribution Manager

Mia Boyd took MOR to explore creating articles in different mediums and to inform and entertain the student body. She is passionate, some would say obsessed, with the idea that socks do not need to be matched. She thinks this societal norm needs to be broken, that it doesn't matter because "you cannot see them!" Since her first birthday, Mia has been able to wiggle her ears and she is a master hairstylist.



Abby Deane (she/her) ('23)
Sports & Culture Editor

Abby Deane loves the journalistic writing style and chose to take MOR to be able to write more in that style. She is passionate about basketball and has been playing with the girls' varsity team since her freshman year and playing basketball for seven years. She is a three-season athlete, playing unified soccer in the fall and running track and field in the spring. She loves spending time with her friends and family and can break into the best moon walk when requested.



Ava Gruner (she/her) ('23)
Internet Overlord

Ava Gruner chose MOR to expand her perspectives and others by informing as many people as possible of Oyster River High School students' perspectives on important issues. She is passionate about learning about different cultures and how each of us is different, socially and physically. She has been a dancer for 15 years and plans to continue through college, joining a dance team if her college offers one.



Sarah Laliberte (she/her) ('23)
Marketing Director

Sarah Laliberte chose MOR because it provided her with an outlet to do what she loves, sharing stories. By taking MOR she can share these stories through writing, videos and other forms of communication. Sarah is interning in the preschool program at the school and is passionate about working with kids. She plans to be an elementary school teacher. She loves to travel but be careful if you decide to go on a trip with her. She might need an extra suitcase as she is a self-proclaimed "professional over packer."



James Li (he/him) ('24)
Archive Manager

James Li wants to learn more about Oyster River High School and the Oyster River Cooperative School District community. He is passionate about music and math, but he hates word problems. He has played the piano for nine years and plans to continue playing for the rest of his life. During the pandemic, at the request of his 8th grade gym teacher James learned how to juggle three objects.



Delaney Nadeau (she/her) ('24)
Events Coordinator

Delaney Nadeau loves the journalistic style of writing and joined MOR to share important events and issues in the Oyster River community. She is passionate about golf and has been a member of the varsity golf team since freshman year. Although Delaney can type quickly, she is unable to do it without her eyes glued to the keyboard.



Abby Owens (she/her) ('24)
News Editor

Abby Owens is excited to be a part of MOR because it allows her to explore different writing styles and gives her the opportunity to talk with interesting people and share their stories with the Oyster River community. She also is thinking about becoming a foreign correspondent. She is passionate about the fact that cinnamon cheerios should never be mixed with milk and loves pumping gas on a snowy winter day with her gas hat secure on her head. If you are ever in need of entertainment, Abby can rectify that: she is able to quote the entire Pearl Harbor 2001 script by heart.



Justin Partis (he/him) ('23)
Features Editor

Justin Partis chose to take MOR to share his writing with others. He also vowed to never write another book report after Essentials of English, and MOR helps him accomplish his goal. He is motivated by other people's happiness and is passionate about music, skiing, hiking, basketball, and expanding his knowledge. He plays cello for the orchestra and people are surprised to learn he has a great singing voice!



Hazel Stasko (she/her) ('24)
Layout Editor

Hazel Stasko decided to take MOR because she was excited by the prospect of reporting on important issues in the community and talking to people affected by them. She is passionate about her studies and sports and adores chocolate milk. She is currently in a milk phase, thinking about it at least once a day. Her special skill is thinking she's the best driver in her friend group and being a master back-seat driver.



Grace Webb (she/her) ('23)
Opinion Editor

Grace Webb chose to take MOR after feeling restrained by the small audience her stories reached, and is excited to share relevant important stories with the Oyster River community. When she is not in school, she enjoys the outdoors by hiking in the White Mountains, downhill skiing, ice skating, or hammocking. Grace also spends a lot of time in the dance studio after school and participates in social justice advocacy. Along with all these amazing skills and passions, more importantly, she can get rid of her hiccups by willing them away in just 15 seconds.

Mouth of the River Mission Statement

Mouth of the River seeks to reliably inform the student body, as well as the surrounding community, of interesting and newsworthy content in a modern, compelling format. Our goal as a staff is to give voice to the students of Oyster River, and have it heard by all our students. The opinions expressed in Mouth of the River represent those of the writers and staff.

Who Gets Privilege?

Privilege is a concept that most high school students like the idea of. For the past two years, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, juniors and seniors could leave the building almost whenever they had free time. Students began getting used to that system and were surprised at the beginning of the year when the policy changed to how it was before Covid.

our goal was to allow students to get out of the building.”

Rebecca Noe, the ORHS principal, thinks privilege is beneficial to responsible students who are able to manage their time. “When I talk to kids who have graduated high school and went to college, one of the biggest things I hear from students... is that they wish they had more practice on actually managing time, beyond just home-



Students signing in and out of the office during privilege time

For the first three quarters of this year, the only year-round privileges juniors get is the ability to arrive to school late if they have a first period free and leave early with the last period free. This has caused confusion among many juniors within the school. Many people are for or against juniors getting privileges, and some think the privilege policy should be changed as a whole.

Privilege is a system that is supposed to grant upperclassmen freedom and independence to prepare for adulthood. The only reason juniors had it last year was because there wasn't enough space in the school for everyone to eat lunch socially-distanced. Mark Milliken, one of the school administrators, explains, “during Covid,

work at night,” said Noe.

Privilege has been well-loved by students in the past because it has allowed them to have more freedom, especially since most of them can drive. It opens up opportunities like leaving school early on a last period free period or going to your favorite restaurant during lunch. Hannah Muessig ('22), an alum from ORHS, always loved how privilege gave her more options. “I remember I used to walk downtown, or sometimes go with my friends places... it was really nice to escape for a bit.”

The system changed back to normal because Covid restrictions were lifted. Before Covid, all seniors could

get privilege, and juniors had the opportunity to qualify for privilege fourth quarter. Milliken explains how “the decision was made to have it be something of a privilege that is earned later in your high school career to get ready for the more freedoms that kids have after high school.”

“Did it do the social distancing that we needed? Yes. The problem was whether students would come back or not.”

There are several students who think the extra freedoms should come at the beginning of junior year, rather than just the last quarter. Emilia Cavicchi ('24), a junior at the high school, is one of those people. “I feel like we’re old enough now, and a lot of us can drive, so we can leave campus if needed. And I think that there’s not really a reason for them not to trust us.”

Muessig also defended junior privilege. “I think that in my junior year, the classes were more challenging, you had to do more for them, and sometimes depending on the class it wasn’t all stuff you could do in school. There’re also more traditions in your life; you’re playing more leadership roles where maybe you need to go out and get things and sometimes it’s helpful to have those blocks to do that. And honestly, it’s more productive.”

The administrators do have reasons for why juniors don’t get privilege until last quarter this year. “I know [the juniors] are bummed out about it but there is definitely a real reason behind it. Not just ‘let’s be mean to juniors.’” Milliken went on to say, “with that many kids trying to go out, it just made it easier for kids to sneak out, and now it’s much more manageable.”

Many students, however, claim they very rarely saw other students sneaking out or taking advantage of the privilege in place last year. Waverly Oake-Libow ('23), a senior at the high school, said how last year “there were no incidents that happened and there weren’t a lot of absences, I don’t think.”

Muessig explained how she also almost never saw anyone abusing the system. “There were a lot of people that used it well and also didn’t do anything bad during the [off campus] time.”

Noe thinks that the privilege worked in that it got students out of the school, but she did often see students taking advantage of it. “Did it do the social distancing that we needed? Yes. The problem was whether students would come back or not.”

The one thing everyone does agree on is that privilege

should be able to be revoked. Cavicchi thinks that “unless really proven otherwise, [juniors and seniors] should be able to start with it, and then I think it would definitely be fair if some kids needed that privilege revoked if they’re obviously abusing it in any way.” Oake-Libow gives some examples of what taking advantage of privilege could look like. “I think if a student is consistently absent or is causing harm on campus then yeah, it should be taken away.”

Many students also believe that it would be beneficial to allow privilege to apply to flexes. Cavicchi explains how “if you don’t need help [in any classes], then I don’t see why you have to be somewhere [at school] and just waste your time.”

Oake-Libow also heavily supports the idea of allowing juniors and senior to leave during Flex time. “If you have nowhere to be scheduled for flex, I think that you should be able to leave.”

Noe explains how “the reason we have Flex is because we heard from teachers and students, they needed more time during the day to meet with teachers.” She thinks if students aren’t using Flex to get work done, then there’s no point for flex and she would get rid of it.

Most students within the school believe that both juniors and seniors should have full-year privilege,

“I remember I used to walk downtown, or sometimes go with my friends’ places... it was really nice to escape for a bit.”

and many administrators have reasons for why they shouldn’t, but will the system actually change in the coming years? Milliken isn’t sure whether it can change or not but does state “I’m always open to listening to students and student input.”

Muessig believes that if juniors got privilege, it would benefit their lives in the future and the success of the school. “As somebody who’s been through Oyster River, one of my favorite things about the school was how much freedom and opportunity we had to try different things that we wanted, and to go out and have that trust, and that trust allowed me to almost be more like an adult and have the freedom that adults do, but also handle some of the responsibilities and I feel like standardizing it and taking it away without any right or reason takes away that part of Oyster River.” M

- Micah Bessette

Learning From The Past

On July 23, 2020, New Hampshire's legislature signed HB 1135 into law, requiring that all New Hampshire schools incorporate Holocaust and genocide history into at least one existing social studies, global studies, or US history class, no later than the eighth grade.

This legislation, set to be implemented this fall, has forced Oyster River's middle and high school social studies departments to reevaluate the current curriculum and determine how to teach about these atrocities in powerful, yet sensitive ways. While most teachers and students view the new requirement as a step forward, some believe more can be done to emphasize the importance of understanding this history.

In past years, Oyster River's social studies teachers have made efforts to teach about Holocaust and genocide history, but these lessons were often scattered in with other units and only mentioned briefly. Hayden Spires ('24), a junior at Oyster River, is happy to see that more attention is being diverted towards this history in the classroom, considering most of her knowledge surrounding these topics was self-taught.

"It's harmful when we quickly go over these horrific periods in history because it leaves kids with so many unanswered questions about the nature of genocide and how ideologies can be taken to such extremes in the first place," says Spires.

Paige Burt ('23), a member of Oyster River's Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion student group has taken a substantial number of social studies classes at ORHS and agrees with Spires. Burt explained how she's received a blanket knowledge of the Holocaust throughout her educational career but cannot vividly remember being taught about it in middle or high school.

"As a Jewish person, I've had to endure a lot of casual antisemitism in school as early as elementary school," says Burt. "A lot of that is kids making off-handed jokes about Hitler, or Anne Frank, or Holocaust survivors. It seems harmless because we don't know much about it [...] so hopefully this requirement will help us recognize that we need to be considerate of people with different identities and keep in mind that this history was not that long ago."

However, for most teachers, the big question is not why an understanding of how religious, national, ethnic, or racial hatred evolves into genocide would be beneficial to students, but how they can implement this history in meaningful ways.

The bill defines "appropriate instruction" in Holocaust and genocide education as the teaching of "genocides

recognized by lawfully constituted courts," "instances of mass atrocities where application of the term genocide is contested," as well as the differences between events that constitute genocide and other types of mass atrocities like war crimes or ethnic cleansing. The bill also requires instruction in how and why political repression, bigotry, and discrimination can evolve into genocide and mass violence. The specifics of what's taught and when are left entirely up to the district's social studies department.

"We need more classes that make us examine who we are, and the ideas about people that we possess [...] We need to put the past in our present."

For some Oyster River High School teachers like Gabrielle Anderson, who's been incorporating lessons on the Holocaust and the Rwandan genocide into her US History and World Cultures classes for years, the new state law is merely a continuation of what she's been doing. "At this point, the department is thinking about how else we can incorporate it, and making sure students learn about multiple instances of genocide so they can build off of their current knowledge and form a deeper understanding," says Anderson.

Meanwhile, eighth-grade teacher Valerie Wolfson, whose curriculum typically focuses on Early American History, is worried about not feeling prepared to teach such an emotionally heavy topic that she's never taught about before, explaining how "knowing is different from teaching."

Jade Terrill, another eighth-grade teacher at ORMS, shares Wolfson's concerns. "I have confidence in [Wolfson's] and my ability to pull together meaningful course materials and to build up the necessary background knowledge, but we just need time and space to prepare." Both Terrill and Wilson recognize that because it's not the only thing they're teaching and because it's so sensitive, creating these lesson plans necessitates time and attention that is sometimes hard to give.

Wolfson and Terrill have also been grappling with how or whether teaching eighth-graders about Holocaust and genocide history should look different from teaching high schoolers, given levels of emotional maturity differ substantially among these grades.

Though many acknowledge these lessons should be developmentally appropriate, some, including Burt, believe most eighth graders can handle this “history in its raw form.” Burt further explained how one of her issues with the bill is that it only starts in eighth grade, saying “A lot of the problems I’ve experienced began when I was younger, so I think it would be beneficial for these ideas to be taught younger.”

Anderson also believes that with the abundance of developmentally appropriate material available to teachers, students of all ages can begin to learn some of the key concepts surrounding Holocaust and genocide history, like “otherness.”

“It doesn’t mean that first-grade teachers should whip out a book about the Holocaust, but they should be having discussions about what it means to feel like an “other” or what it means to be excluded,” says Anderson.

Despite the obstacles that come with implementing this requirement into the curriculum, teachers like Terrill and Wolfson are hopeful this legislation will open a path for more difficult conversations in the classroom, which were discouraged earlier this year by the state’s Divisive Concepts Law. This law prohibits schools from teaching that “one group of people is inherently racist, superior, or inferior to people of another group,” but many educators feel its vague language makes it difficult to discern what

topics are off limits in their classrooms.

“You know, teachers in the district find [the Divisive Concepts Law] to be a load of nonsense because we’re only trying to teach an accurate version of history; however, we also acknowledge have no control over the emotional mindset of students,” says Wolfson. “That’s why a lot of our work in these conversations around genocide will focus on providing social frames for dialogue and disagreement within a classroom setting.”

We need more classes that make us examine who we are, and the ideas about people that we possess [...] We need to put the past in our present.”

Rebecca Noe, ORHS’ Principal, also noticed the irony in this bill’s enactment, saying “it’s good to know that among those who created the Divisive Concepts Law, you have others who are realizing the effect it might have on keeping important topics from being talked about in schools.”

As Oyster River continues to move forward in the planning stages of administering HB 1135, a process that should be complete by next fall, some teachers and students hope to see the teaching of genocide history extend beyond the required content.

“As the social studies department begins to rework electives, I’ve started to think more about offering a Genocide studies elective,” says Anderson. “Of course, it would be up to student interest, but I would love for students to dig deeper into some of the concepts that we can only touch upon in class.”

Burt would also appreciate an elective like this, especially if it enables students to look at their identities and their own biases in the context of this history, saying “we can’t just say these things happen in the past and say that these hateful ideologies don’t exist anymore. We need more classes that make us examine who we are, and the ideas about people that we possess [...] We need to put the past in our present.” M

- Abby Owens

Artwork inspired by Evel Lean



The Not-So-New Tech Policy

On the first day of school, students were caught off guard when their teachers informed them that personal laptops were no longer allowed to be used during class time.

For students that had brought personal laptops to school with them for the past year, this meant a fundamental change in their access to technology in the building. Many students had used personal laptops in school for the past year with no issues, so teachers and students alike weren't aware of this change. Though it could've been due to the school's issuance of laptops to all students, or even to protect students from the risks of the internet without school filters in place, that was only speculation. The real reason? There wasn't a change at all; the tech policy at Oyster River High School (ORHS) has been the same for years.



Celeste Best (right) confiscating a student's personal computer

COVID-19. "I think there's a focus at the beginning of this year that we need to kind of get back to policy rules, and then if changes need to be made or things need to be altered, then we move forward with that," says Best.

"The internet can be a dangerous place, and we have to think about the safety of our students, which we can do through our devices."

Even Celeste Best, science teacher and digital learning specialist at ORHS, was unaware that language preventing the use of personal devices in school was present in the policy. According to Best, teachers were only informed in the days leading up to the start of school that students were not going to be allowed to have personal devices during class this year. The cell phone policy set in place for ORHS by the school district covers personal laptops. Best says she "didn't even know that that language was in [the policy]."



Srivatsan doing homework for a UNH class during flex

For students, it was the same. "Teachers said, 'we are supposed to enforce it,' but I never realized that the policy did not change," says Shashu Srivatsan ('23), a senior who has been using his MacBook at school since last year.

The likely reason for this lack of awareness is a relaxation of policies regarding technology in the past few years because of

The district technology policy states that the use of technology at school is a privilege, not a right, must be for an educational purpose, and that devices used during school time have no expectation of privacy. Additionally, the policy states that personal devices, encompassing both students' phones and laptops, are not allowed during class time without teacher permission, are not the responsibility of the district, and are subject to the same policies as school devices when being used in the building. These policies have been in place since 2008, and have not changed, as they are built upon the fundamental idea that technology is simultaneously a resource and a privilege.

However, personal devices are still allowed outside of the classroom, or during downtime in a class with the permission of a teacher. Students who bring personal laptops to school can often use this time more effectively because of the freedoms and efficiency that their personal laptops often provide. For example, Srivatsan uses his device for college applications and work for his University of New Hampshire (UNH) classes. "I'm taking a math class at UNH, so often times I'll have homework... and UNH resources which I can't access on school computers," he says.

For Waverly Oake-Libow ('23), using her personal computer at school would allow her to do everything- school work, college preparation, or otherwise- with a single device. "It's easier to use one thing. Plus, I have all of my college stuff under a personal email... not under an email that's going to go away after a year."

Although there are benefits to having personal devices in the building, there are also downfalls. Notably, the school is not responsible for students' personal devices, and can't fix them even if they are being used for academics. "It's not so much about the personal computer, it's about making sure that if something happens, we can fix it," says Best. In her opinion, "if something happens to [a personal laptop] in school, the school's not gonna fix it. You're on your own... [so] leave it at home. Work on it at home. That's fine."

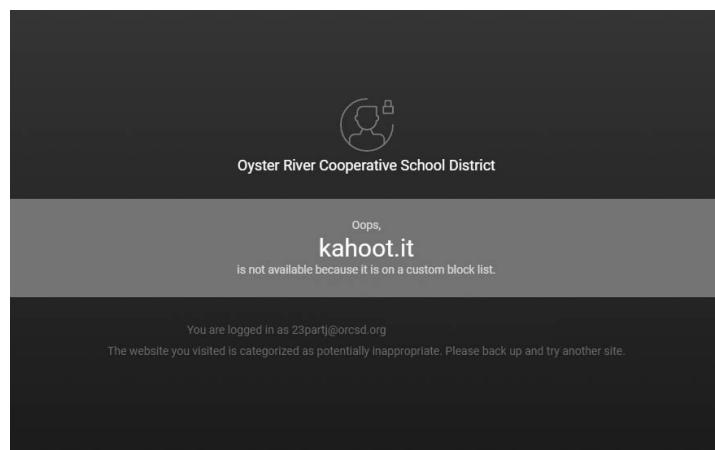
Every student having the same device also allows for a streamlined learning experience on that device. “It’s not so much the policy, it’s more about ensuring that everyone can do the same thing, and learns how to use it,” says Best. For some programs, like Microsoft Excel, the interface can change drastically from one platform to the next, which can lead to students being unable to follow instructions when learning how to use a software due to the features of a software being in different places on different computers. That can become a barrier for learning to use software, especially if the student has never used a program before, but that can be prevented if everyone is using the same device to access software.

However, school devices have their own downfalls, like the difference in speed between students’ school devices and personal devices. For Nick Ricciardi, culinary teacher at ORHS, that difference makes it hard to tell kids they can’t use their personal devices for schoolwork during his classes. “It’s tough to tell a kid to put it away when they can look you right in the eyes and say, ‘well, this computer is going to do it in half the time.’ There’s a certain level of productivity that [students] have, with a nicer computer than the ones that we’ve given [them].”



A stack of school-issued devices

But for Rebecca Noe, principal at ORHS, one can only do so much with the resources available for devices to be purchased. “I don’t ever think there’s a perfect device for how everybody wants to use [it] for all their needs. So, for school needs, that’s what I have to focus on.” Additionally, not all students have the same access to personal computers, so it is more equitable for everybody to have the same school-provided laptop.



The blocked page for Kahoot, an educational game service that was banned on school devices after it was found to violate federal student privacy law

accidentally accessing content on the internet that is inappropriate, or even harmful, for students to be interacting with. “Every educational facility institution has a filter. So, when you’re doing schoolwork, there will be certain sites that you can’t get to because they’re not appropriate.”

“The internet can be a dangerous place, and we have to think about the safety of our students, which we can do through our devices,” Best says. “On a personal device, you don’t have a filter. With our filters on these devices, we can make sure students are safe.”

But these filters limit the ability of students to access the internet even when it is appropriate and safe. With apps, websites, and even the Microsoft store being blocked at the beginning of this year, students have been facing issues with using school technology for their day-to-day learning. This led students to often bring their personal laptops just to bypass the filters set by the school, like Oake-Libow, who brought her MacBook from home last year just to access sites while researching for class. “When I took [College Composition] … there were so many sites I couldn’t go to just because of the things I was researching, and it was really annoying how I was restricted to some sites when I knew there was nothing wrong with the site,” she says.

These issues also extend to teachers, although teachers can override a blocked site at their discretion when signed into their own account on a device. Best, for example, is also a science teacher at ORHS. “As an anatomy teacher, a ton of my stuff gets blocked,” she says. Many materials that are needed for her curriculum are flagged as graphic, which can get in the way of class.

Even if it doesn’t seem like it from time to time, like with the tech

“If something happens to [a personal laptop] in school, the school’s not gonna fix it. You’re on your own.”

“Are there nicer laptops? Of course, there are. I wish we could spend \$2,500 per student on a MacBook, but that’s not reality,” says Best. Additionally, the school may be looking into faster, more expensive Microsoft Surface Pro laptops for the next round of student device purchases. “That’s coming down the road,” Best says, but likely not soon.

There is also an element of student safety that cannot be ensured on a personal device. Noe has seen cases where the filtration provided by school devices has served to keep students safe from

policy, the reasons behind policies in place at ORHS boil down to student safety and equity. “Like with everything, a lot of times, decisions are being made about things that we might not know why… There might be behind-the-scenes things that we don’t know about. It’s easy for us to complain about, but maybe there’s more to the story,” says Ricciardi. The rules in place aren’t new, so, “if we’re gonna have rules, we’ve gotta try to follow them the best we can.” M

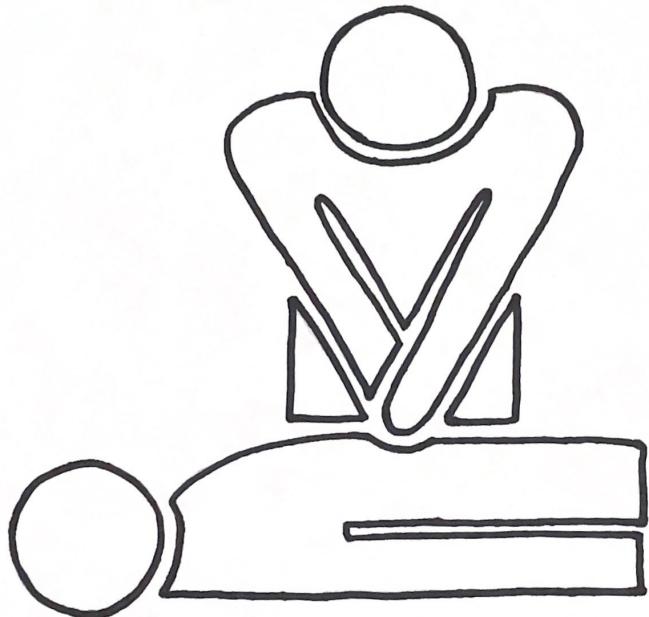
- Justin Partis

Stayin' Alive at ORHS

Learning CPR is not just dancing to “Stayin’ Alive” by the Bee Gees, and in Oyster River High School (ORHS) Exercise Physiology and Wellness (EPW) classes, students are taught the skill to actually help someone stay alive in a cardiac emergency situation.

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is a lifesaving technique that involves chest compressions and rescue breaths to help someone who’s heart has stopped. It has been taught as a part of the EPW curriculum for over 30 years and although the course has slightly changed, the main point is the same: teach students how to save a life. Whether it’s a family member, a stranger, or even your teacher, it’s important to know how to respond in an emergency. Every staff member and almost every student in ORHS is CPR certified and many students have even incorporated that skill into their job. Many feel that being able to save a life is one of the most valuable things a person can learn and ORHS values teaching students the skill at a young age.

“I believe it is extremely important for anyone to have the basic skillset to save a life. Becoming CPR certified is a resource and tool that one can use when emergencies occur,” said ORHS



more important [than learning] to save someone’s life? Really? We’ve had cases where kids or people that have taken our class have [even had to do that].”

ORHS woodshop teacher Mike Troy is a perfect example of that. “We all thought [teaching CPR] was very important. I thought it was very important. I just never realized that we would need to do it for me. Never in my wildest dreams did I think that I would be the one having CPR performed on [and that was] what happened in 2012,” Troy said. Troy had the flu.

“We all thought [teaching CPR] was very important. I thought it was very important. I just never realized that we would need to do it for me.”

nurse Kim Wolph. ORHS is one of few schools in New Hampshire that teaches CPR in school.

EPW teacher Don Maynard explained how ORHS “has always agreed to pay to get everyone certified.” The program is able to run with the help of McGregor EMS. Both EPW teachers Maynard and John Morin were able to become certified CPR instructors through McGregor as well. They supply the class with mannequins and other equipment needed. He said, “that helps a lot. If they weren’t right across the street, it would make it a lot tougher.”

According to the American Heart Association website, New Hampshire is part of the 20% of states that do not have CPR education requirement laws. So how and why does ORHS choose to teach CPR if it’s not required by law? Don Maynard, EPW teacher, said, “well, arguably, can you think of anything that would be

He is an active, working guy with no other known health issues. However, he explained how the flu can attack any organ. For him, it was his heart. He was sitting in the middle of his room on September 10th, 2012 when his students noticed that he didn’t look so good. “I just fell out of the chair. [Students] said I hit the floor, hit my head, too. They didn’t know what was happening... The kids rolled me over and I was blue,” he said. Troy went into cardiac arrest which means his heart just stopped. “No warning, no nothing. Just done.”

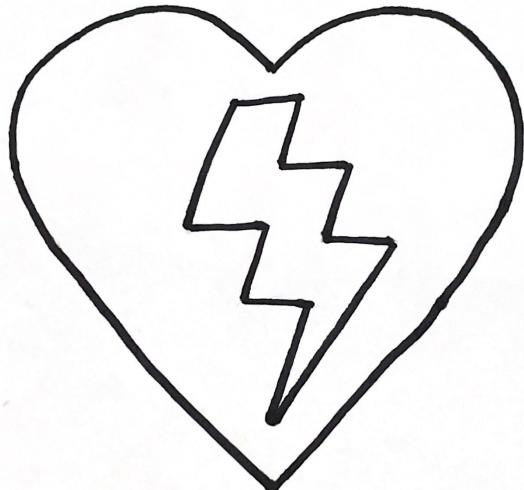
Thankfully for Troy, a student in his class took charge. She told someone to get the nurse, someone else to get out in the hallway to find a teacher and somebody else to call 911. The gym teacher at the time, Amy McPhee, came and performed CPR alongside the school nurse until EMS arrived to help. Maynard recalled the day: “Unbelievable. To have [it happen] in front of the class. But

again, it could happen anytime. You never know.”

Had the student not known how to react to Troy’s emergency situation, he may not have been here to tell his story. The American Heart Association website states, “some 350,000 cases [of cardiac arrest] occur each year outside of a hospital, and the survival rate is less than 12 percent. CPR can double or triple the chances of survival.”

Sabrina Golden ('23) babysits and found that being certified helped her find more jobs. “I think that I’m way more confident of a babysitter,” she said. “If something were to happen, I know CPR, I know who to call and I know the steps [which is reassuring].” Golden continued, “Just knowing CPR makes you a more confident person and it really can save a life at any time. I think the younger that you learn it, the better off everyone is.”

Cayden Giordani ('24) is a beach lifeguard and was certified for CPR through both lifeguarding and Scouts. He explained how he is confident in his skills to react in an emergency situation but that others may not feel comfortable enough to do CPR even with the training the school provides. “Most people know a little bit about CPR, but I feel like I know how to use an AED and



“Some 350,000 cases [of cardiac arrest] occur each year outside of a hospital, and the survival rate is less than 12 percent. CPR can double or triple the chances of survival.”



do CPR [very well]. My training was more in depth.”

“I think it is important [to teach], but I feel like it’s really hard to teach in the school setting,” said Quinn Carlson ('25). Carlson is a lifeguard at UNH and was certified in both EPW and an outside class. He felt that “getting certified was easier after [learning in EPW], but I still didn’t remember everything. I wouldn’t want someone to take that and not remember everything and then be put in a situation where they’d have to do it,” he said.

Being put into a situation where someone has a cardiac emergency can be extremely shocking. Wolph shared that even if someone wasn’t certified or comfortable, “folks that are calm under pressure and can take direct orders are extremely useful to have nearby in an emergency. There are a lot of moving parts during an urgent event and having someone who can be a runner or a line of communication is so very helpful.” That was seen in Troy’s instance where the student got help quickly and adults took over for the actual CPR part.

Responding in a cardiac emergency is something that most people will never encounter in their day to day lives, however having the skills to save someone if it were to happen is extremely important. Even if students can’t perform chest compressions, they have the education to remain calm and figure out what to do. Maynard said, “I like to think the CPR is a class that most physical programs in the state aren’t doing. It’s one that I think helps to make ORHS better.” M

- Libby Davidson

The Plight of Paras

Every morning on her drive to school, Oyster River's Assistant Director of Student Services, Melissa Jean, passes a bright pink sign in the shop window of her local candy store: *Hiring, \$17 an hour.* As she continues driving, she's left distracted by one thought: "why can't I pay my paras like that?"

In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, public school districts nationwide have been experiencing a surge of paraeducator shortages, and Oyster River High School (ORHS) is currently working to fill seven paraeducator positions. Amplified by low hourly wages, this shortage has impacted not only the school's current paraeducators but also the special educators they're assigned to and the students who regularly rely on para support. To address this issue, the school board has been working alongside the Oyster River Paraeducators and Support Staff AFT (OrPass) to negotiate better employee benefits. Still, some wonder if more can be done to ease these impacts and prevent drastic shortages like this in the future.

A paraeducator, or 'para,' is an adult who works individually with students who require instructional or behavioral support. They can also be assigned to special educators' classrooms as 'program' paras to provide additional help to students who need it.

"Paras are integral to the inner workings of the special education department," said Nicole Casimiro, who worked as a paraeducator for 10 years before becoming a special educator at ORHS. A paraeducator's primary role is to ensure that all students have access to the curriculum, and Casimiro says that entails many things like "helping to facilitate study skills classrooms, working to implement various parts of Individual Education Plans (IEPs), and even subbing in for teachers who need to step out."

However, unlike teachers and special educators who the Department of Education licenses as classroom teachers, paraeducators are considered support staff and are in turn paid hourly wages instead of more secure salaries. These wages also depend on the level of experience and education each para has.

According to Melissa Jean, who's responsible for hiring para and special educators at ORHS, Oyster River's starting wage for paraeducators is between \$14 to \$15 an hour. To put that in perspective, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average hourly pay for the top 75% of fast food and counter workers in New Hampshire was \$14.27.

In the six years she's spent communicating with her assigned program paras, ORHS special educator Anna Goscinski believes this shortage partially resulted from paraeducators feeling they're not being adequately compensated for their work. "Most of the time,



ORHS para, Val Borror, helping a student during flex.

they do so much work, and it goes unrecognized because there are so many moving parts in a day, and there are so many moving parts to supporting a student. [Paras] are literally boots on the ground in the classroom, taking notes and working directly with students. I think that's where [these wages] can feel unrewarding," said Goscinski.

Jean agrees with Goscinski, explaining how it's easy to find hourly-paying positions that offer higher wages and don't require the extensive training that paraeducators need. She also explained how most of the paras hired last year left to pursue higher-paying jobs in other educational positions. In most cases, paras see their position as a steppingstone that will carry them over to another teaching sector or a new career altogether.

"As I think back on my own time as a para, for me it made sense to stay in that position because I knew I wanted to become certified [in special education]," said Anne Golding, another ORHS case manager. "I think everybody gets to a point in life where they need to take a step back and ask themselves if they're fulfilled. For paraeducators, you hope that working with kids is enough, but sometimes it's not. So, if you don't feel like you're being compensated well, some don't feel like it's worth it to stay."

One of the most significant challenges presented by the shortage is the frequently changing schedules of paras and special educators, who must work together to ensure that all student needs are met. These changes often require paras to rush from class to class to cover an IEP need that the school is legally obligated to protect, forcing special educators to mend gaps left by their paras.

"In the past, you would get a schedule, which would pretty much stay the same for the rest of the semester. Now, we still have our as

“[Paras] are literally boots on the ground in the classroom, taking notes and working directly with students. I think that’s where [these wages] can feel unrewarding.”

signed roles, but being short-staffed means we have to shift our responsibilities on the fly,” said Barbara Kester, a paraeducator who’s been working at ORHS since 2014. Kester continued explaining how “almost every morning we have to look at schedules and move paras around to see how we can get coverage for all our students, which can be tough.”

Val Borror, a second-year para at ORHS, explains how scrambling around the school trying to accommodate students can get hectic. “I absolutely love my job, but we need to pitch in and cover each other when necessary, and that can be difficult,” said Borror.

Some paras think that by stretching themselves thin, they are minimizing the impacts on students. Still, Borror acknowledges how this shortage has made it impossible for one-on-one students to establish the same relationships they used to with their paras. Since Borror believes that the core of her work is forming bonds with students, she is disappointed when she’s unable to because paras are constantly swapping the kids they are working with.

“Every special educator, though we do the same job, is different just like every teacher would be, so having somebody who knows you and works well with you is important,” said Casimiro, who also recognizes how vital consistency is in a student’s day.

The vacancies in the special education department have also impacted special educators. While Golding understands why paraeducators are leaving their positions at such rapid rates, she articulates how operating an entire department when you’re missing seven people is difficult. “It’s a ripple effect,” said Golding. “When you pull from one place, you’re leaving a hole someplace else. Our department’s ability to work as a team and be collaborative is something that has helped [...], but we need to understand that constantly having to fill in these gaps might not be sustainable for however many weeks, months, or years these shortages last.”

Despite the para “burnout” that most of ORHS’ paraeducators and their case managers have been experiencing, there’s hope that the added benefits negotiated by the paraeducator union, OrPass, this summer will attract applicants and help keep paras in their current position.

Many see these benefits, which include dental and health insurance, free classes at Granite State colleges, an additional 50 cents

an hour for paras with an associate degree, and an extra dollar an hour for a master’s degree, as a step in the right direction. However, special educators like Casimiro are uncertain how effective these benefits will be. “I understand that administration can only do so much, but if you’ve got a group of younger people who are coming in still on their parent’s insurance, they’re concerned less about things like health benefits and would probably find a substantial pay increase more beneficial,” said Casimiro.

While Jean can’t promise a future pay raise, she says she can foster an environment that makes people want to continue working for the Oyster River special education department. Jean says that she wants her paras to feel they have supervisors at Oyster River who support them, students who rely on them, and colleagues who help them out when they’re “in a bind.”

Compared to other school districts, Kester thinks Jean and administration have worked hard to ensure that ORHS’ paraeducators feel appreciated; she just believes that the role of a para should be valued more in general. “It’s just such a demanding, important job, and people are not being appropriately compensated for what they do,” said Kester. “People should be able to support themselves with this job, but they can’t.”

Like Kester, Jean also hopes that Oyster River will become more cognizant of the work put in by paraeducators who have allowed the special education department to run smoothly, explaining that “special educators can’t be in all these classrooms helping students; it’s just not possible. People should be able to access the same education as everyone else, and paras make access to the curriculum possible for everyone [...] Without paras, the system just doesn’t work.” M

- Abby Owens

*Image courtesy of Madelyn Marthouse
Artwork inspired by Vecwteezy*



The Future of Sophomore Electives at ORHS

For years, Oyster River High School (ORHS) has prided itself on a robust elective system. Sophomores through seniors have fulfilled their English and social studies requirements with a wide range of heterogeneous, mixed-grade electives created by generations of Humanities teachers. However, ever since core classes were implemented in the sophomore curriculum, many have been left to wonder: what is the future of electives at ORHS?

The change took place last year, when instead of the usual variety of single-semester electives, sophomores were given two choices for a year-long English class and only one option for fulfilling their US History credit. As covered last year in Laura Slama's article "The New Sophomore Program of Studies," this change was met with mixed responses from students and teachers. Still, the community believed that the change was temporary and caused by the learning and social-emotional development lost during the COVID-19 pandemic. Now that two brand new sophomore English classes have been developed and the core curriculum has been extended into the 2022-2023 school year, it is becoming clear that the change is not as temporary as many people thought.

Rebecca Noe, ORHS' Principal, says the decision to change course offerings for sophomores had already been made before she was hired at the start of last year. Part of the reason for this was Covid. The district was aware that students may have needed to be separated into class-based cohorts to mitigate the spread of the virus, so keeping all sophomores in the same classes rather than mixing with juniors and seniors just made sense. It was also clear to the prior administration that students needed time to make up the social and academic growth they'd missed out on during a year of online school.

Their solution for the 2021-2022 school year was a core curriculum. All sophomores took US History instead of registering for alternatives like African American History, Environmental History, or American Studies. Likewise, sophomores could register for the year-long classes Sophomore English with Journalism or Sophomore English with Expository Writing, but could not take other popular electives like Mythology or Poetry and Fiction. Beginning this school year, sophomores have two new literature classes to choose from: Voices and Vision in Literature, or Magic, Monsters, and Mythic Figures. These classes were created through substantial work from the English department and combine elements of several existing electives with entirely new material.

These changes were spurred into action by the pandemic, but



conversations about shifting the options for sophomore classes had been happening for years prior.

Reports by the New England Accreditation of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) had pointed out to ORHS administration that the elective system was causing some students to be tracked. In other words, students were placed into classes that adults thought would be harder or easier based on their performance in previous classes. "And that's not what we promote, right?" says Noe. "We promote a heterogeneous [grouping]. If it's gonna be an elective system, everybody has choice. But the fact was, that wasn't happening for sophomores."

Plus, because junior and senior choices were prioritized in the class selection process, sophomores were not getting a full range of elective options. They were instead sorted into about four different classes, according to Noe.

"Sophomores weren't actually getting choices."

"Sophomores weren't actually getting choices. They were either steered towards certain electives or taking electives their friends wanted to take," Noe says.

These findings were in administrators' minds already, and when the pandemic hit, another issue was presented. Students were not only set back in learning the skills necessary for their academic classes, but there were also significant drops in student mental health. Introducing year-long classes for sophomores is part of the high school's response to this.

Noe explains, "a lot of research goes into showing that when kids are in high school, especially the first two years... building relationships with teachers over a longer period of time and having the stability of not as many transitions is really helpful."

Another issue in the old elective system was continuity in the curriculum, according to Noe. She says that if a student took, for example, Cold War and the 60s in their first semester and then US History 2 during their second semester, they never learned the state requirement of early American history. Additionally, with a new state law requiring all students to pass a US naturalization test to earn their high school diploma, two semesters of US History plus Citizenship Education (a required class for Juniors) cover everything on the test, while other US History electives do not. This was not the reason for eliminating US History electives, but it is a benefit of the new system.

While these are the administration's reasons for the changes, not everyone entirely agrees with them. "We had, as a department, been clear that we think the elective system is a good system for our sophomores," says Kara Sullivan, an ORHS English teacher. "We wanted to continue to have them in the elective system after that

initial Covid year. But then we were essentially asked to continue that, and when I say asked, I mean we were told that that was what was going to happen."

Dave Hawley, a social studies teacher who has taught at ORHS for over 20 years, is a proponent of an elective-based system. "Our elective system is what makes us unique," he says. "That was the foundation of our philosophy for decades, because if you give students choice about what they want to take, they're going to be more engaged in those experiences. If you have a required course, it automatically has this flavor that it's required. It's a whole different animal than when you've chosen a class and you have excitement about the choice you made. It makes you more invested."

"Anytime we see a reduction in that, it's sad for veteran teachers like myself," adds Hawley. "I can't speak for every teacher, but I know the veteran teachers are pretty proud of this system, especially in English and social studies."

Sullivan, who is in her 22nd year of teaching at ORHS, agrees. She says she and others in her department "feel that, similar to our heterogeneous grouping, oftentimes people are brought up in their learning when they're challenged."

Amelia Nott ('23) was in the last class to have had the old elective options in sophomore year. When she was in tenth grade, she took Debate and Persuasion, Mythology, and the class that is now College Composition for her English credits. Nott loved the variety of electives she took in her sophomore year, saying, "I thought it was really great that I didn't have to take something that I just didn't want to do."

Katie Pescosolido ('24), says that when she feels more in control of her classes, she is more invested in their outcomes, making her get better grades.

"I feel like I would have done a lot better, grade-wise, if I had been in more classes that I really enjoyed. I definitely understand having a very regulated freshman year because you're just not used to any of it," said Pescosolido. "But I think in sophomore year there should at least be more choice than what we had, just to really keep students engaged as they move into the upper levels."

Sullivan also noticed that many sophomores last year exhibited an immature attitude towards school and weren't taking it seriously. In the past, when sophomores were mixed in with juniors and seniors in electives, the older students would model positive classroom behaviors and a more mature way of interacting with classroom materials. Sullivan says that this experience of learning from upperclassmen was "more beneficial than having a whole group of sophomores together."

Paige Stehle ('25) also misses having an older perspective in her classes. "It would have been nice to have people in other grades because you get different perspectives through talking about different things," she says.

"Having a more limited choice this past year put more pressure on us to get good classes this year and maybe next year, just because the school has so many options," Pescosolido adds. "Sometimes it can feel like a lot to have only two years to get what you want and fill in the credits that you need underneath that."

This has led to another result of the change in sophomore course offerings. Even classes that have never been available to sophomores are experiencing large changes in enrollment.

"One thing I've noticed this year is that because sophomores get a literature elective credit, the enrollment in some of the literature classes in the elective system has gone down," says Sullivan.

Sullivan usually teaches four sections of Literature and the Land

each year, a literature class that has only ever been available to juniors and seniors. This year, only two sections worth of students enrolled in the class. This decrease in enrollment was surprising to Sullivan, because that level of change "typically doesn't happen that abruptly." While a class might lose one section and stay at that number for a while, such a drastic change is unusual.

Hawley has noticed a similar trend. While the electives Hawley teaches, which are only available to juniors and seniors, haven't changed significantly in enrollment, enrollment in classes that have historically been offered as US History alternatives has "dropped precipitously."

Stehle provides a potential explanation for this phenomenon, saying that even though she wanted to take African American History and Environmental History for her US History credit this year, she doesn't think she will take them in the future because she doesn't have room in her schedule. "I mean, it's fine, because it's not like I'm specifically interested in those classes—I don't want to do [a career] with those classes. But it would have been nice to have the option to take those instead of just plain US history," Stehle says.

Noe is aware of this change in enrollment, but asks, "are we looking at electives because people like teaching them, or are we looking at electives that kids want to take?" She points out how little choice students were getting in their sophomore year classes, especially in English, and argues that now, sophomores are getting just as much choice, but with the added stability and support of having one teacher for the full year.

"So, why would we change that, if these are based on what sophomores were already taking and they still get to choose one of those two things? There is choice there. It's just not this plethora of choices, but they weren't getting that anyway," Noe says. "Looking at the data tells me that the choices they have is what they would have gotten... and that this is what's good for them right now."

So, will the new core curriculum for sophomores last? That remains to be seen.

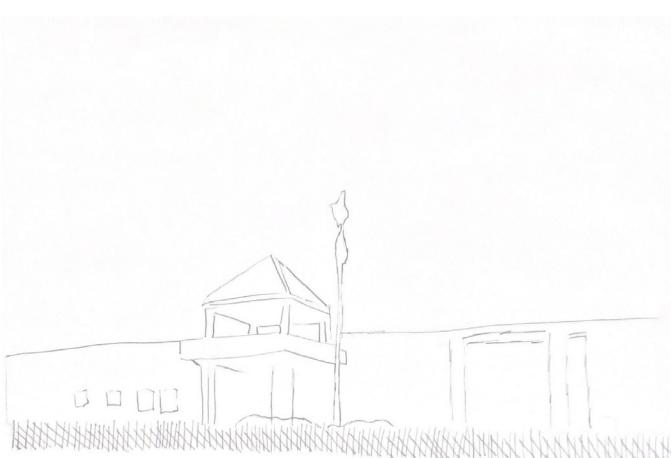
"If you're asking me what my decision will be in this moment, it would continue at least for a couple more years," Noe says. "There's a conversation about the elective system for sophomores and year-long classes, but I don't know of any changes planned right now. That's not in the works right now." M

- Zoe Selig



Securing the School

How Oyster River High School is Making the School a Safer Place



Theo Fleischer ('23) tries to walk into school at 2:57 p.m. As a senior with privileges, he spends his last period, a free period, at home. With his cross-country practice starting at 3:15, and Nick Ricciardi, a coach who's a stickler for tardiness, Fleischer likes to get to school with ample time to change into running clothes. He rushes from his Prius to the front of the school, ringing the bell to notify the office to unlock the door, but it stays locked, and he is stuck outside. Due to new practices, the front office won't let him, or anyone else, into the school until 3:00 p.m., the end of the school day.

Oyster River High School is one of many schools across the country intensifying school safety. Recent school shootings have dominated the news cycle and led to a cultural shift in how safety is viewed in schools. In Oyster River High School, new practices have been created this school year, along with old practices being enforced with new vigor. These changes have created a response of resigned acceptance among staff and students. Although they might be an extra annoyance to busy people, they appreciate the importance of approaching school safety with a new sense of cautiousness.

New practices include the front office taking car keys from visitors, giving them a visitor badge, and urging staff to stop and talk with any person on school property they do not recognize who is not wearing a badge.

Old practices that will be more strongly enforced this year include keeping all doors inside the school in a locked position, keeping all exits closed (not propped open), having staff and students leave only out the front office door, and staff signing out before leaving.

With COVID having loosened restrictions when it comes to privileges and many freedoms, this new stricter environment has been a shock to many. "It's so much harder to tighten the reins

on something that's been so open for so long," Jennifer Weeks, an English and film teacher, said. Over the past two years, administration has wanted kids out of the school building for their safety, encouraging kids to leave during lunch or free periods. Now, administration wants students to stay inside the locked doors of the building. "Our perception is just skewed," Deacon Throop ('24) said on how these new practices are being viewed by students because of the different environment caused by COVID-19.

ORHS staff has overwhelmingly welcomed the change, stating they are irritating but in everyone's best interest. "It gives us black-and-white boundaries, which we haven't had in a long time," Weeks says, referencing what she explains as a more laid-back time of COVID. The principal at ORHS, Rebecca Noe, added that students "are under our care. [Staff] are responsible for you, and that's a very big responsibility." Having those clear-cut rules for staff and students to follow relieves some of the stress around the responsibility for keeping students safe.

These new practices for John Morin, an EPW teacher at the high school, can create an uncomfortable environment. In previous years during the beginning of school, when the days were still hot, the gym doors would get propped open to circulate air through the stuffy room and alleviate discomfort. This year that is not allowed; all entrances to school must be locked and unpropped. Morin has accepted this discomfort. "Everyone's safety is more important than that," he said.

Students have a similar response of resigned acceptance. They feel frustrated when they are banned from leaving the lunchroom, exiting out a door that is close to their car, or forced to knock on a teacher's door after returning from the bathroom, but they understand how important these practices are. For other things, including

"Safety, then education, then fun."

eating in the senior core and teachers wearing name tags, some students do not understand how these practices are going to help in an emergency. "It's just not necessary. How is wearing a name tag going to stop a gun or a fire?" Fleischer said.

Administration does not see it this way. "Safety, then education, then fun" is a catchphrase coined by Noe, which she has repeated many times this school year. She recognizes that these practices may take away from the fun of school, but that fun is not her number one priority. This is an attitude shared by Mark Milliken, who says, "our priority is the safety of students." These practices are how they are keeping students safe, and not enforcing them would be disregarding their jobs.

Theo Fleischer had to wait an extra three minutes before entering the school that day, an added inconvenience that he found unnecessary. Yet, he was still able to make it to practice on time. It was overkill in his book, but to those responsible for his safety, it was necessary. M

- Hazel Stasko

COMING SOON!

MOR is collaborating with UNH's newspaper, *The New Hampshire*, to cover the upcoming midterm elections. Check out our writers' stories about the County Commissioner, Register of Deeds, District Attorney, and State Senator races. Read *The New Hampshire*'s other articles about what's on the rest of the ballot, and then make sure to vote on November 8th!

Elections for both national and local positions have a huge impact on our lives. By voting, you can have a direct say on the issues that are important to you, from school funding to the criminal justice system to economic policies, and everything in between. Every vote counts: in 2016, the New Hampshire senate race was won by just 1,017 votes—that's less than the population of Madbury! Do your research, and if you're 18 or older, make sure you vote! If you're not old enough yet, consider driving your friends to the polls and encouraging your family members to vote. Let's make our voices heard!

Getting registered

In New Hampshire, you can register to vote at the polling place on election day. Here's what you need:

1. Your drivers license or other photo ID to prove your identity and age
2. A document to prove your residency, like a bill, bank statement, or lease
3. Your birth certificate or passport for proof of citizenship

Where to vote

Durham residents:

Oyster River High School, from 7am-7pm

Madbury residents:

Madbury Town Hall, from 7am-7pm

Lee residents:

Mast Way Elementary School, from 7am-7pm

Barrington residents:

Barrington Middle School, from 8am-7pm

Scan here to read our election coverage!



A Look into the New Classes at ORHS

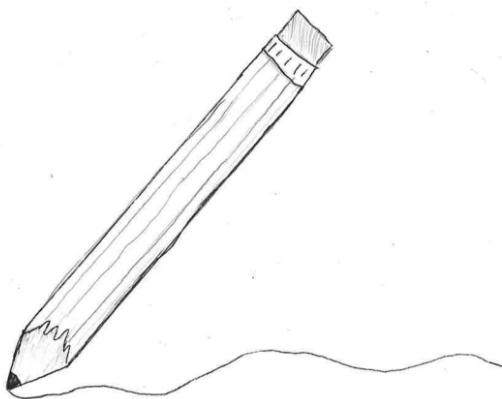
Do you have a free period that feels unnecessary? Are you a freshman who doesn't know what English class you want to take next year? Do you need to fill an elective requirement? Do none of the current classes interest you?

Don't worry, every year new classes are added or introduced. Here are the new classes that were added this year, and a brief background into why they were created and the topics they cover.

Monsters, Magic and Mythic Figures – 1 year class

This is one of the 10th grade English classes, taught by Jennifer Weeks, Alex Eustace, and Maggie Trier, that replaced Sophomore Seminar this year. Sophomore Seminar was a mandatory class for Sophomores that was created with a more reading focus, as the 2nd semester would be Journalism 1 or Expository. It was thrown together quickly, so they didn't have a clear theme in mind.

Then at the start of last year, the English teachers got together and brainstormed classes that were "interesting, engaging, and uniquely sophomore, not something that was more like an extension," according to Weeks. They wanted to use traditional literature connecting to these topics, resulting in monsters and mythic figures like *Frankenstein* and *The Great Gatsby*, but they also wanted to include the fantasy genre, since there was not already a class relating to it.



Voices and Visions in Literature – 1 year class

Voices and Visions in Literature is the other 10th grade English class, taught by Kara Sullivan and Corey Blais. The course focuses on contemporary literature on current issues. The topics generally covered are inclusion, mental health, immigration, and also a topic the students themselves can choose. Using literature on these topics, Blais says students can learn how they can approach these topics as well. "A lot of the characters in the books we're looking at, they're not only looking at societal issues, but the characters have their own approaches for dealing with those societal issues, and us talking about this is going to help us think about how we can approach these issues." Additionally, students will also write for New York Times competitions, including the Memoir and Editorial contests.

Calculus – 1 year class

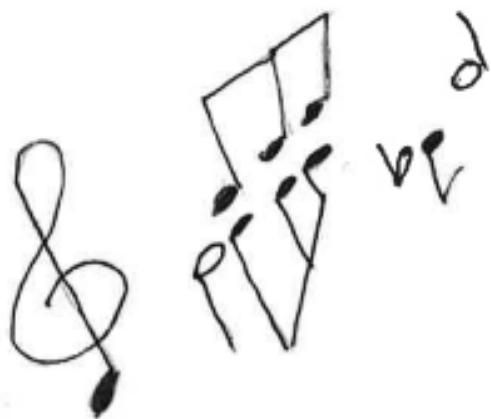
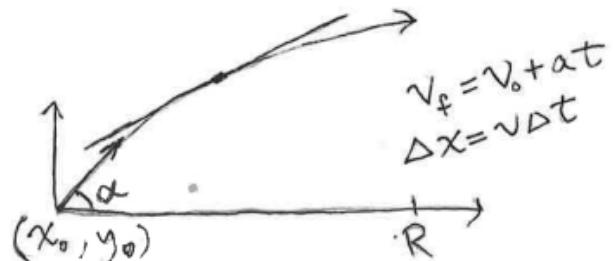
Calculus is a Running Start class taught by Vivian Jablonski. It covers what would be covered in a 1st semester college calculus class, or what would be covered in AP Calculus AB. Many students who take this class are interested in calculus, however they do not want to take the AP test. Some of these students are already taking AP classes and didn't want the immense workload. "Some of the students in my class this year are also taking AP Stats, so they didn't want to have two AP classes. I also have a few students who weren't sure if they wanted to continue with math in college, but they did want to take another math class." Despite not being AP, you can still get college credit in this class through the Running Start program.

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AP Physics 2 – 1 year class

AP Physics 2, taught by Jim Thibault, is an extension of the AP Physics curriculum including fluids, optics, thermodynamics, and more. “Energy is largely the umbrella of AP [Physics] 1, and [AP Physics 2] is largely looking at other forms of energy or other things related to forces that are not in the 1st semester course,” said Thibault.

A couple years ago, AP Physics 1 and 2 were a combined class which would be taught during Blue and White days, however the school removed it from the curriculum. It was recently reintroduced because of the increasing popularity with AP Physics 1 in the past years. AP Physics 2 is for students who are interested in physics and would like to continue learning it. The prerequisite is AP Physics 1.



Songwriting – ½ year class

Songwriting is a semester-long class taught by Marc LaForce. Songwriting serves as another music offering for people who don't want to do Chorus or Orchestra. Songwriting is more focused on the parts of music, like chorus, verses, lyrics, however rhythm and notes are still a big part of the class. In this class, you will learn basic music theory, form, and even dissecting popular songs to see why they are popular. Mostly, though, you will spend your time on writing songs. If you want to learn to write songs, or if you've already wrote songs and just want guidance, this class is for you. However, it is helpful to have some music experience (i.e. note and rhythm reading) before taking this class.

Music Production – ½ year class

Music Production, also a semester long class, is also taught by LaForce. The class uses a sequencing program to create music, but it also goes over basic music theory, similar to Songwriting. So, what's the difference? LaForce describes Music Production as “fiddling around with different instrumentations, different drum sounds, bass sounds, whereas songwriting is more nuts and bolts about focusing more on songs itself, and less about the instruments around it.” No musical experience is required for this class.

Global Diplomacy and the United Nations – ½ year class

This is a reintroduced class taught by Gabrielle Anderson. The premise of the class is global diplomacy and the United Nations (UN), and the tactics that diplomats use taught through simulations of the UN. In the class, there would be a situation, which could be real or imaginary, and the students would take the role of a country in the UN and act how that country would respond to the situation.

“Any simulation we’re doing, there’s the topic and then there’s the country which you’re representing and their viewpoint. Really the idea here is that this is how things work, this is how they solve issues or don’t solve issues and getting students to have a better understanding of how decisions are made,” says Anderson.

Along with this, students get to pick what they want to do and what situations to reenact. One great thing about this class is it is offered to 9-12th graders, giving underclassmen more choice in electives.



These classes add more to the wide variety of classes at ORHS. If you would like to learn more about any of these classes, ask the teachers who teach the class listed above. **M**

- James Li



Heaney and the King of Spain at a Fulbright Fellowship Event in October '21

Kate Heaney spent the last year and a half teaching English in Spain and now she's back to her old stomping grounds to teach Spanish.

At the end of the 2021-2022 school year, Mary Beaton, a long time Spanish teacher here at Oyster River High School, retired. The school sought someone to take her place, and Heaney was perfect for that role! Heaney always knew that she wanted to be a teacher, but even through her undergrad she never knew what she was going to teach. So, she double majored in English and Spanish and then went to grad school to get her master's in teaching. She did her student teaching hours here at ORHS and really enjoyed her time in the classroom. Now, after teaching English for a year and a half, she's taking on Spanish.

During her time at UNH, Heaney spent 5 months studying abroad in Granada, Spain and fell in love with the culture. "It's just so different from here. It's much more relaxed and less rushed."

After graduating from her undergraduate program, she decided to stay at UNH to finish her master's in teaching. Heaney had known since her semester abroad that she wanted to eventually go back to Spain and she "knew that [she] wanted to take a break from school before going into real life." During that time, she found out about something called the Fulbright Fellowship, a program that gave her the opportunity to go back to Spain this time to teach English in Gijón.

Heaney worked hard on her application with the help from a woman at UNH who specialized in helping students apply for grants and thought she had a good chance at getting the position, but that didn't eliminate the nerves. As soon as she found out that she got the job, she

¿QUIEN ES SEÑORA HEANEY?

called one of her best friends who had already found out they were going to Spain for the next year. Her best friend was stoked and then asked how her parents felt about her heading off to Europe for the year. That's when Heaney realized she should probably tell her parents.

Coincidentally, Heaney finished grad school during the early part of the COVID-19 pandemic and was supposed to be heading to Spain for the 2020-2021 school year. Instead, her full year position turned into just what would be second semester. She shared that, "when the grant got

cut short, I was initially pretty disappointed, but then I was more relieved that it wasn't canceled all together than anything else." Finally, she ventured

"High school is a little bit different there. It starts in seventh grade, so they go seventh grade to tenth grade and at tenth grade they either decide to keep studying or to just be done."



off to Spain and as expected fell back in love with everything about it.

Due to the pandemic shortening her original year, she found out sometime around March she was able to stay in Spain for the next year. She was “content to be there at all.”

After spending 18 months immersed in the culture, Heaney found herself thinking about whether she could see herself moving to Spain more permanently. While she loved it and thought it would be amazing, she kept getting



caught on the fact that “high school is a little bit different there. It starts in seventh grade, so they go seventh grade to tenth grade and at tenth grade they either decide to keep studying or to just be done.” She didn’t really love that idea and so she decided it was time to come home for a while.

“It was so interesting because in the US I teach English as English and Spanish as a foreign language and so getting to teach English as a foreign language was a really cool way to blend the two of them,” Heaney shared about the experience of teaching the language she had grown up speaking as a foreign language to these students.

“Her interactive teaching style helps make sure that class isn’t boring. I am excited to see what [else] we do this year.”

Heaney had done her Ed-500 training here at ORHS, which is when undergraduate students are able to spend time in a classroom to observe what it is like to teach students and be a part of their classroom communities in a supervisor/educator role. So, when she saw the job posted with an opportunity to return to area, she thought it would be worth applying. She went through the interview process and was extremely grateful that she was offered the position.



Now a few weeks into the school year, Heaney is loving her time teaching. She really enjoys getting to know the students and helping them further their academic careers, and her students seem to be enjoying her classes as well. Bella Smith ('26) is in Heaney’s Spanish 3 class, and said, “her interactive teaching style helps make sure that class isn’t boring. I am excited to see what [else] we do this year.”

Outside of the teaching aspect of the job, Heaney is loving getting to know her students especially those in her advisory. She has a freshman advisory this year which she really likes because she feels like they are all getting to see the school from a new perspective and “it’s cool to experience that along with them.”

So far Heaney’s advisory has played lots of Uno and various other games, and she says she is “looking forward to spirit week and getting to see how my advisory acts along with the rest of their peers!” One of her advisees, Laura Boughton ('26), shared, “she is a great advisor because she understands that we need a break from the academic part of the day,” and that she enjoys having an adviser that is young and wants to have fun and connect with her students.

“I am really looking forward to everything that is to come in my time here at Oyster River!” shared Heaney. M

- Delaney Nadeau





Bringing Back Books



“A room without books is like a body without a soul.”
~Marcus Tullius Cicero

Recently, I have gotten back into reading with a bang. When I was a kid, I would consume books daily, burning through chapter books at the ripe age of seven. When I got into middle school, however, I started to fall out of love with reading. It began with reading a book maybe every month or so, then just reading for classes, and then even finding that a chore. However, more recently, I have yet again become obsessed with books, and it's been amazing.

Don't get me wrong, even when I fell out of love with reading, I would still buy books, I just could never stay interested in them. The books either didn't instantly pull me in or I found myself easily distracted by other things in life that made it hard to focus. However, this has changed a lot for me recently.

So, why did I suddenly want to start reading again? In the age of social media and constant mental stimulation from a phone, I was getting bored. I found myself constantly on my phone, mindlessly scrolling through the pages, disinterested in a lot of it. I mean, sure, social media can be great, but sometimes you just need a break. Plus, it does help when you find a book that you become newly obsessed with.

During the spring, I went back to Barnes and Noble, pacing the horror aisle looking for a book that piqued my interest. One that stood out to me was called *Theme Music*. Curious, I bought the book and found myself reading it whenever I got the chance. While this book wasn't exactly horror, it was more of what I discovered to be a psychological thriller. This was a book that kept me on the edge of my seat the entire time I read it.

The book took me about four months to finish, but once I did, I wanted more. This is when I turned to 'BookTok.' BookTok is a phrase that is a spin on the name of the app 'TikTok.' When you look up BookTok, hundreds of thousands of videos populate your screen with recommendations for book lovers of any age.

While BookTok has been amazing for me and given me so many good book suggestions, others think it may not be the actual books that people are liking, but the idea of having the books. Eleanor Raspa ('23) has been an avid reader for a long time. She too has heard about BookTok and found some good recommendation, but she thinks maybe others enjoy the books for different reasons. "I think it's about the aesthetic [of the books]... I think a lot more people are interested in reading, but I feel like people see the BookTok videos, get the book, and then don't read it."

I agree with Raspa on this; I feel as if there were certainly times, I would buy books because the cover looked pretty or it was popular,

but I never read it or didn't enjoy it. Even if sometimes this 'book look' is more to seem trendy, I still have found some great recommendations, and even a new author that I and many other people in my age demographic have become obsessed with. Her name is Collen Hoover.

Collen Hoover writes books for older teens/adults, and her books connected with me instantly. The first book I read of hers was *Verity*, which stands out from her other books because it's more of a thriller and less of the typical romance she usually writes. I didn't know what to expect when I picked up this book. I was nervous I would fall out of love fast and it would sit to die on my shelf. I finished the book in 48 hours.

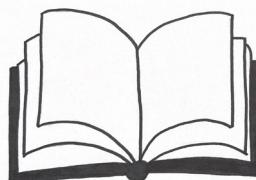
After reading one, I now have what I am referring to as the 'Hoover Addiction.' The next book of hers I read was *It Ends with Us*. This book dove into such sensitive material but was written so darkly and so well. She made me feel for every character in the worst and best way possible. Because school was starting, this took me a little bit longer to read, but I did pick it up whenever I had the chance and cried three times while reading it too.

Not only is reading super fun to do, but it can also be incredibly beneficial. According to an article written by Healthline Magazine titled, "Benefits of Reading Books," reading more can help reduce stress, prevent age related cognitive decline, build your vocabulary, and so much more. And I'm not the only one who's been enjoying reading recently.

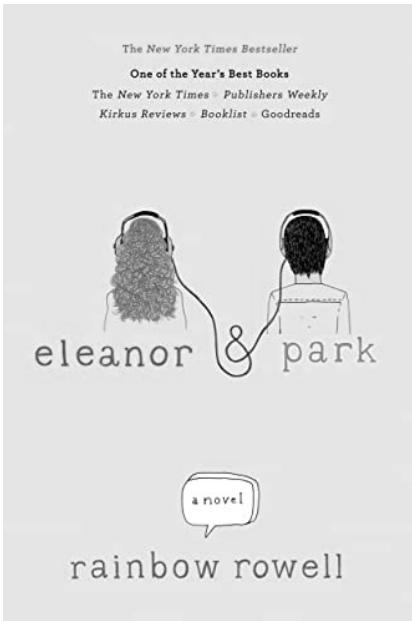
In a poll I had done on Instagram, I asked fellow Oyster River students if they felt the same as me and have begun to read more as we have gotten older. Out of 34 students, 53% said they had begun to read more, while 47% said they hadn't, and that's okay too! Sometimes, reading may not be for everyone, and it can feel like a drag, but finding the right thing to read is the same as finding the right TV show to watch.

To encourage even more reading as I go through the year, I signed up for Advanced Seminar in Literature, a class all about reading offered to the seniors at Oyster River. This class dives into the complex meanings behind different pieces of classic American literature. While I'll have to wait until next semester to take this class, right now I can rely on the new book I will be starting, *Reminders of Him*, by you guessed it, Collen Hoover. I also have received some great student book recommendations I plan to check out too, and you should too! M

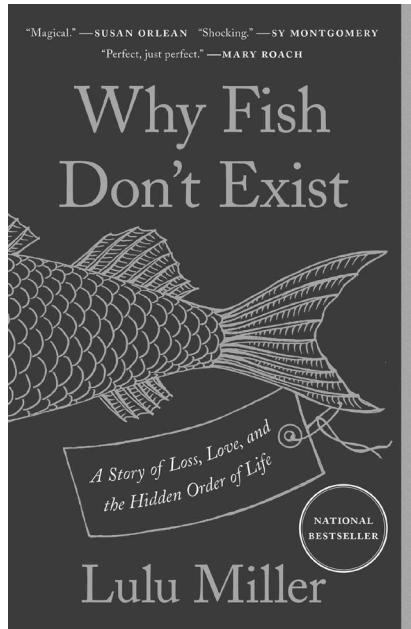
-Tess Brown



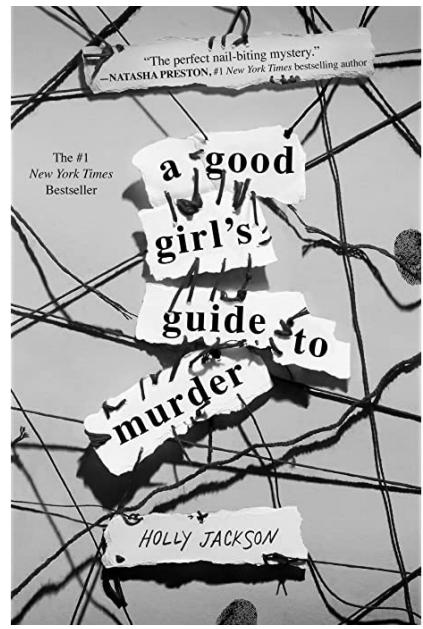
Book Recommendations



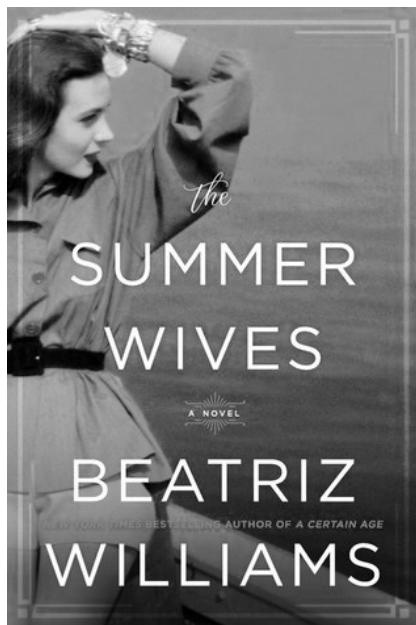
Ulysses Smith ('25)



Sofia Self ('23)



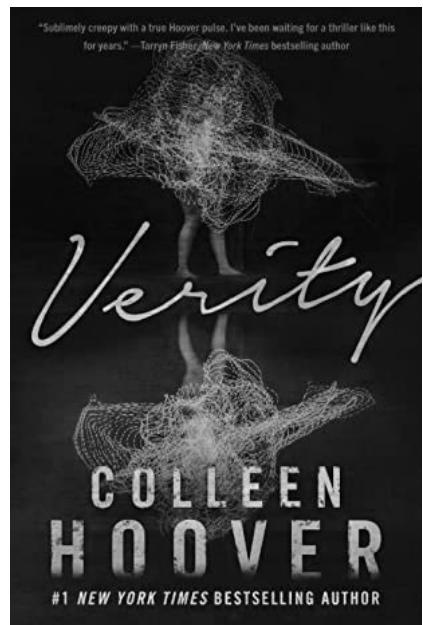
Leah Lynskey ('26)



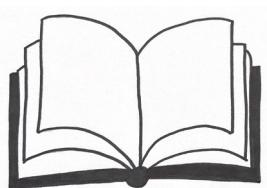
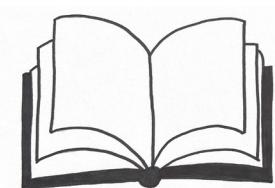
Nori Sandin ('23)



Tess Brown ('23)



Tess Brown ('23)



A New Face in Math Lab: Sarah Jeong

You're tearing your hair out over your Geometry homework. You've turned this triangle in every direction imaginable but you still can't figure out how to write this darn proof. You don't have a study hall that aligns with your teacher's prep period and you're just about ready to give up and take the docked formative grade for not completing your homework. Suddenly, a lightbulb appears over your head. A wave of serenity washes over you. You climb the stairs to the third floor tower and enter the safe haven of T310: Sarah Jeong's math lab.

Jeong is the new math tutor at Oyster River High School (ORHS), hired to provide extra math help to students in Pre-Algebra through AP Calculus. While she is new to this position, Jeong is no stranger to teaching math. Before this school year, Jeong spent three years teaching seventh grade math in Somersworth and Barrington, and she has about ten years of experience as a private math tutor for high school students. That calm feeling I described doesn't go away when you walk into Jeong's classroom, either. If anything, it grows—Jeong emanates an air of gentleness, warmth, and patience that makes even those of us who struggle with math willing to sit down and try a problem again.

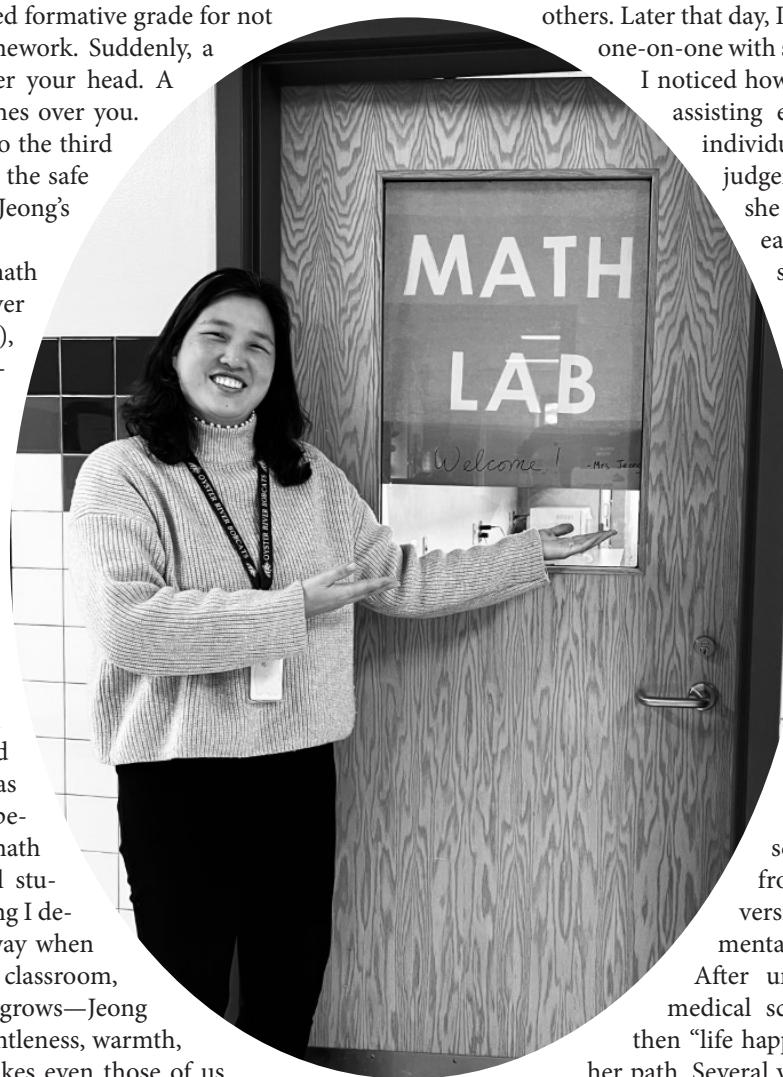
I interviewed Jeong for this article during a busy shift of supervising Flex overflow in the cafeteria, a few stories be-

low her usual environment. After calmly-but-confidently signing in thirty-plus rowdy students, Jeong sat down with me at a slightly sticky table to tell me about her life and aspirations. One thing was clear to me from the beginning: Jeong's love for both the subject of math and teaching it to others. Later that day, I observed Jeong working one-on-one with students in math lab, and

I noticed how much care she put into assisting each student with their individual needs. There was no judgement in Jeong's voice as she slowly worked through each problem with her students, pinpointing the exact right way to explain an equation so they could reach the correct answer. I was seriously impressed (and made a mental note to come back next time I was studying for a math test).

While Jeong seems like a natural at teaching math, it was not her initial career plan. She always took and enjoyed advanced math classes while in school, but graduated from Northwestern University with a BA in environmental sciences and pre-med.

After undergrad, she attended medical school for one year, but then "life happened" and she changed her path. Several years later, Jeong's family moved to Durham, and a neighbor asked her to help tutor their child in math. Word spread quickly, and soon Jeong was tutoring more and more students on top of being a stay-at-home mom.



Jeong says that when she started tutoring, “I remembered how much I enjoyed studying math when I was younger. Just explaining the math to kids and seeing them understand and be successful was really rewarding for me.” After this realization, Jeong got her teaching certification from Granite State College and began working in schools.

Jeong enjoyed teaching seventh grade math, saying she “built really good relationships with the kids.” Still, she is excited about making the move to ORHS. Because she has so much experience tutoring high school students privately, she feels comfortable with the curriculum and age group. She is also curious whether teaching high school math might be in her future, and is tutoring at ORHS to gain exposure to the high school setting. Plus, as the parent of one Oyster River graduate and two children still in the district, this job puts her much closer to home.

Outside of teaching, Jeong says a hobby she has taken up is gardening. “I’m getting really interested in getting to know different plants and flowers and what works well in our garden. There’s a lot of joy in watching things grow. I think that’s related a lot to teaching, too, and why I like teaching and helping kids,” Jeong says.

“There’s a lot of joy in watching things grow.”

“I’ve had a better understanding of what I’m doing since seeing Ms. Jeong”

This love for encouraging growth is definitely felt by Jeong’s students. Lindsey Morin ('25) has known Jeong since she was in seventh grade, when Jeong was in her first year as a math teacher in Somersworth. She says that even when students in her class were difficult, Jeong “was always



Jeong helping a student in Math Lab

very patient, very kind, and very willing to help you with anything anytime you needed help.”

Now that she’s in high school, Morin says that she sees Jeong often for math support. “She’s very helpful and I think I’ve had a better understanding of what I’m doing since seeing Ms. Jeong,” says Morin.

Math teacher Katie Johnson also vouches for Jeong’s effectiveness as a math tutor, saying she “seems to have great mathematical knowledge.” Johnson says that this early in the year, only a few of her students have visited math lab,

but those who have are “doing well” as a result.

Johnson adds that, because Jeong has taught several students

from Barrington in middle school, “a lot of students were already familiar with her before this year. I think that’s an added bonus for a lot of students.” Where Jeong already has relationships with many students, they feel more comfortable going to her for assistance.

Math help is not the only thing Jeong offers to her students. Morin says she also likes seeing Jeong in math lab because “I just enjoy her company. She’s easy to talk to.” Morin says Jeong is “one of those people that just sits there and listens. She doesn’t always give her input—she knows

when it’s needed and when it’s not needed. She has children of her own, so she knows how to sit there and make sure you feel like you’re being heard.”

To benefit from Jeong’s help, students can pop into math lab during almost any period of the school day. Whether you need help with a concept or just want to get to know her better, Jeong says it is a good idea to come to math lab. “I want to encourage students to use the math lab if they feel confused at all. It’s good to come in earlier and try to get help before the problem gets too big,” says Jeong. If a student comes into math lab, they can expect a lot of individual attention while Jeong assists them with any questions they have on their homework or class.

Morin says she “one hundred percent” recommends that other students go to math lab to get help. She says, “A lot of my friends struggle with math... And, you know, I don’t really like math, but I don’t mind coming [to math lab] because I just know every time I come here, Ms. Jeong’s going to be one-on-one helping me until I understand it.” M

- Zoe Selig

Keeping Up with the Klassrooms

I stifle a yawn as I walk through the doorway into my first period class. The lack of sleep evident on my face, I slump into my chair and prepare myself for the first bell of the day to ring. As everyone settles into their seats, the teacher makes their way over to the computer to take attendance.

"Would you like me to leave the lights off, or turn them on?" the teacher asks the class.

"Off, please!" I desperately call out. Murmurs of agreement come from my classmates as I hear the words "leave them off" from all sides of the room.

I have strong opinions when it comes to lighting in classrooms, as my eyes are very sensitive, especially early in the morning. To me, lighting is a vital part of how classroom environments impact my learning experience, but I have found that other Oyster River High School (ORHS) students have a variety of preferences when it comes to room design, encompassing everything from lighting, desk-arrangement, posters, artwork, and plants.

I journeyed throughout the building, talking with teachers and students, in order to get a greater perspective on classroom environments. Throughout my search, I found that it really boils down to individual preference and how we can maximize accommodating the needs of both students and teachers through classroom settings.

Jonathan Bromley, a science teacher at ORHS, understands the rationale behind finding a classroom environment that best suits himself and his students. Bromley recalls a district-hired consultant visiting ORHS years ago, who described educational best practices. "He was probably the first person ever to get

me to realize, as a relatively young teacher at the time, the importance of really thinking through the learning environment and the layout," Bromley stated.

Bromley finds that he places emphasis on using "the room as part of the teaching tool in ways that engage the kids" in classes like Environmental Science, NextGen Biology, and Design Thinking Seminar. He also opts for an uncluttered feel in his room; simplicity, function, and adaptability are his core values for his classroom setup.

As a current student of Bromley, I find his way of engagement and organization to be very beneficial for my learning style. With long class periods, it can be hard for me to sit at a desk throughout the full length of class, which is why I greatly appreciate how he incorporates shorter note-taking sections on the white board or projector, getting up out of our seats

to talk with lab partners, interactive demos where we engage with the room (ex. learning to correctly position a compass), and of course, using the outdoors as an extension of the classroom. While this methodology will not work for every class or subject, it has proven to work for Bromley and myself.

Both Bromley and Kara Sullivan, who teaches in the English department, incorporate the outdoors into classes such as Environmental Science and Literature and the Land (Lit and Land).

While they teach entirely different disciplines, both teachers are similar in their passion for including our surrounding ecosystems into their curriculum to strengthen their students' learning experiences. Sullivan uses the outdoors as a focal point of Lit and Land, believing that having the addition of going outside during sections of class time has benefited her students, as it breaks up the eighty minute block periods.



Environmental Science students exploring the outdoors.

Photo Credit: Jon Bromley



Jon Bromley's science lab, L150.

Throughout my time at the high school I have gotten more used to the longer class periods, but I still find it difficult to sit through the blocks, especially towards the end of the day. It's extremely helpful for me when teachers break up their classes and allow their students to take a break or move around, even if it just means getting us out of our seats and walking around the room.

While I haven't taken Sullivan's course, right now I'm taking Environmental Science with Bromley. So far, I've greatly enjoyed the time we have spent working hands-on in Oyster River Natural Area (ORNA). Bromley finds that it is incredibly helpful for his students to "get their hands on the real life stuff we're actually talking about in class," and I would agree, as working in the field has allowed for me to make deeper connections to the content that I probably wouldn't have been able to do if we stayed indoors.

Back inside the school, I see evidence that each teacher has their own unique classroom environment, with their classroom design and layout playing significant roles in the vibe



The Writing Center, room C125.

desk and table arrangements in classrooms throughout the building are often a constant. This does not take away from the importance of their setup on the overall learning environment. Ty Dorow ('23) describes Celeste Best's divergence from the typical two-person table setup in the science department

"Having plants and more artsy stuff on the walls makes me feel a little more creative and like I can explore my own thoughts and my brain."

of the class. Sullivan prefers to keep her classroom organized and neat, as it "gives me a sense of calm, and I try to maintain that for my students as well." I greatly appreciate rooms that emanate tranquility, as I try to keep my own room at home in a similar manner. Keeping my things orderly and put away helps me be more productive at home, and I see similar habits occur-



to be very helpful in a course like Anatomy and Physiology, where collaboration is a vital part of the class. Dorow believes that while this desk configuration worked throughout his time in Best's class, there is no true one-size-fits-all when it comes to classroom layouts.

Like Dorow, I've found that desk placement varies across departments and even teacher to teacher. While I would like

to have a circular desk arrangement in all of my classes, not every room or type of class can accommodate that. Science classes do not have the capacity to create a circle shape, as there are lab benches, sinks, wall outlets, and other materials that can't be moved. Other departments, such as English and social studies, can be more flexible in their arrangement.

Burt agrees, preferring a circular desk arrangement, as it can be "really annoying and awkward when I'm wrenching my neck back and forth to look at the teacher and the board." I am all too familiar with the neck strain that accompanies having your back to a whiteboard or projector, which can sometimes be unavoidable due to the stationary nature of white boards and projectors. Dorow's perspective on the mat-

ter seems to be widely applicable, saying, "whatever the teacher finds comfortable for them, I find works well for the class."

Sullivan favors configuring her classroom's desks in a circle as it promotes active discussions, a key focus in many of her courses. "If you're going to have a lot of discussion in your class, I think it makes sense for people to look at each other when they're talking. So I find it very difficult to have a discussion in rows, because then people direct all of their comments to me...instead of making it more of a collaborative kind of environment."

Student collaboration seems to be emphasized in many different classrooms throughout the school, including the Writing Center, which has areas for both quiet, independent work and more social arrangements. Alex Eustace, an English teacher who also works in the Writing Center, tries to "emphasize students choice and independent work whenever possible" in his own teaching. "I think that really allows students to approach any task that they may have in sort of their own unique way that is most accommodating to them," Eustace says.

Walking into the new location of the Writing Center for the first time felt like I was transported into an entirely different building—a hidden oasis of greenery and soft lighting located right next to the Senior Core. Lamps, (fake) plants, art, and turtle paraphernalia are abundant. While there is no natural lighting due to the absence of windows, Eustace and Jake Baver, who is in the charge of the Writing Center, have worked tirelessly to make the space feel comfortable and welcoming for students, including becoming entirely independent of the overhead lights.

Clio Grondahl ('23) enjoys working in the Writing Center, saying, "the entire space, while it seems really fun, also feels incredibly focused." Grondahl cites the Writing Center as being a

great spot for her productivity levels—the perfect combination of subtle background noise and decorations to fuel creativity and get in the zone.

For me, the classroom environment that fits best depends on the specific work that I am doing. If I'm reading, I need absolute silence to concentrate, whereas if I am doing math

problems, I don't mind the type of background noise that is common in the Writing Center. I believe from personal experience that it's beneficial for students to have different options for their best-fit environment when they need to focus and get work done.

When focusing on writing, Grondahl feels that "having plants and more artsy stuff on the walls makes me feel a little more creative and like I can explore my

own thoughts and my brain." Eustace concurs that the environment for the Writing Center has to fit the needs of its students, adding that "for writing, a lot of the times you really need to be able to access that part of yourself that is very difficult to do. And having a space that doesn't actively play defense on your ability to do that is helpful."

Baver and Eustace have noticed an improvement in their students' productivity; proving my initial theory correct, that the Writing Center has made great strides in providing a learning environment tailored to both what students want and need—socially, emotionally, and academically.

While each classroom has their own unique arrangement and environment, overall I've seen that teachers prove to tailor their rooms well to what works best for both their own teaching styles and the needs of their students. This cooperation between teachers' ability to change their classroom setup and students' wants and needs is a work in progress, but I think leaving an open line of communication between students and teachers will prove to be successful in making sure everyone ends up happy with their educational experience.

Eustace and Baver see eye-to-eye in the regards that happiness is a "great barometer" of student success, mentioning that "it's really hard to learn or to feel good about your school experience if you're not happy." I'm happiest at ORHS in a working environment surrounded by natural lighting, plants, a quiet space, and a massage chair. While this is not possible or feasible throughout the whole school day, I'm grateful for the flexibility my schedule allows me to choose the spaces I work in outside of class time. After all, happiness and productivity go hand in hand, or in my case, lamp and plant. **M**

- Grace Webb



Shawn Kelly's room, C127.

Colleen Fleming: Our New (Secret)ary

Where were you on Valentine's Day in 2012? Colleen Fleming, now attendance secretary at Oyster River High School (ORHS), was carrying out an arrest warrant in Brunswick, Maine for Jessica Bartlett and Mark Judd, who were indicted on 3 counts of both Social Security fraud and aggravated identity theft.

As I would soon find out when I sat down for an interview with ORHS' new administrative assistant, Fleming worked for 24 years with the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Inspector General (DHHS), in Maine. There, Fleming was responsible for investigating fraud and abuse involving the programs provided by the US DHHS, like Medicaid, and arresting the individuals who were committing these crimes. During her time there, Fleming had seen a little of everything. However, after retiring in June of 2022, she decided



Colleen Fleming (right) in a photo on the front page of the Lewiston Sun Journal on June 3rd, 2009
Photo courtesy of Colleen Fleming

"It was a job that completely changed my life."

she wanted to go back to work, which led her here: the front office of ORHS.

When I heard that ORHS had hired a special agent to work in the front office, I was beyond intrigued. Having only met Fleming once, I wanted to know more. So, one morning, I stepped into her office and asked if we could meet sometime for an interview. With a small smirk, she said yes, but not before handing me a sticky note with the words 'Colleen Fleming, Special Agent, Maine' jotted in blue ink. The first result for that query in Google is a case report titled 'United States v. Bartlett,' where Fleming was one of two agents who had arrested Bartlett at her home in Brunswick.



Fleming at age 17 with George H.W. Bush in Kennebunkport
Photos courtesy of Colleen Fleming

Her life working in the government didn't start out there, though. She actually started her government work with the Secret Service, but not as an agent. Fleming began her government work at age 17 through a program offered by the United States Department of State. During her office practice class in high school, she answered a call from the secret service. The agent on the other end informed her of a paid position working under George H.W. Bush at their residence on Walker's Point in Kennebunkport, Maine, right up the street from her hometown of Wells.

In Kennebunkport, Fleming was the secretary for the Secret Service's Presidential Protection Detail for George H.W. Bush. She would type reports, deliver teletypes (a type of telegraph), and do other administrative work for the agents who worked for the Detail. When I asked her if she knew what she was getting herself into, she laughed and replied, "absolutely not."

For Fleming, the job was the gateway into her future career as an agent for the DHHS, since she hadn't considered a job with the government before taking the position. "It was a job that completely changed my life," she told me. "It opened so many doors. Once, George [H.W.] Bush came up behind me and put his hands on my shoulders and said, 'do you have any friends that could help Barbara make beds?' and, at the time, I was thinking about all of my 17-year-old friends, and I said, 'no one I can think of.'"

Fleming told me how fortunate she was in hindsight. "I got to go to a couple of white house Christmas dinners and stuff... got to talk to the president on the phone a couple of times. I didn't understand because, of course, I was 17, how significant that would be because everybody doesn't get to do that."

But, once Bill Clinton won the next presidential election, Fleming had to leave the position in Kennebunkport when it was moved to Texas. However, Secret Service agents that had worked with her in Kennebunkport put in a good word for her with the US Department of Education in Boston. When a position became available at their office, they called Fleming and asked her if she wanted to be interviewed. She said yes.

After only a year or so in that position, she was offered a position with the DHHS. Normally, agent positions like the one she was offered can have up to 1,500 applicants, but her previous work with

lowed him to the Lewiston House of Pizza," she said, laughing. "It was like pure gold."

Although that case was one of the funniest, Fleming also said it was also one of the more stressful for her. "The search warrant in that case was 127 pages, and I was responsible for executing 20 simultaneous search warrants. So, I had a team... of 130 agents from 10 different agencies." Logistical nightmares like that, along with having to testify and undergo cross-examination on the witness stand at trial, were near the top of Fleming's list of stressful experiences with the DHHS.

"I just really missed the energy that kids bring; I find them to be very funny, and comical, and just full of possibilities."

the Secret Service and the US Department of Education granted her the opportunity to bypass that applicant pool and begin her career with the DHHS. From then on, she was Special Agent Fleming.

Of the many cases that Fleming worked on during her time with the DHHS, some stood out for her more than others. One of the funnier cases she mentioned during our interview was against Ahmed Guled and his caregiver Dahabo Osman. Guled and Osman were a couple, and Osman was supposed to be the caregiver, as Guled reportedly needed help with simple tasks and functioning day-to-day. Fleming "suspected that this was malarkey," and decided to set up a surveillance van near their residence before an appointment with nurses and assessors from the DHHS that were there to check in with Guled.

Fleming sat there for two hours before Guled pulled into the driveway with his 'caregiver,' Osman, in the passenger seat. About a half hour after they'd gone into the house, Fleming told me, "[Osman] walks out, opens the trunk, gets two canes out, and walks [back] into the house." During the assessors' visit, Guled reportedly "couldn't get up, couldn't do anything." But after [the assessors] left, I fol-

However, the most exciting and stressful of experiences for Fleming often happened when she was out making arrests. The Mark Judd and Jessica Bartlett case was a prominent example of a stressful case for Fleming. She told me that during the arrest of Bartlett, "when we finally got the door open, [an officer] had a taser pointed [at Bartlett] and [she] was using her baby as a shield."

Another one of the most exciting things that could happen in a case was finding evidence. In one of her cases, Agnus Smith and Dwayne Schwartz were found falsifying requests for transportation reimbursement. Smith was supposedly driving Schwartz to and from medical appointments, but Fleming could not find record of the doctors listed on the reports. How did Fleming finally catch Smith and Agnus? "One night, I was watching Grey's Anatomy and every doctor that they had written on the reports was on Grey's Anatomy. I could not find them anywhere, so I was like, 'yes!'"

In June of this year, after 24 years, Fleming retired from her position with the DHHS.

But, not long after, Fleming wanted to go back to work. "When I left my job... we had been remote for almost two years, so I was working at home with almost no interaction... At that point, both



of my kids were living off at college, and I have to say, I think I just really missed the energy that kids bring; I find them to be very funny, and comical, and just full of possibilities.”

When the secretarial position at ORHS opened following Lisa Richardson’s retirement at the end of last school year, the school was looking for someone who was detail-oriented, organized, wanted to work with teenagers, and, above all, could multitask. For Rebecca Noe, Principal at ORHS, Fleming had those abilities, along with 24 years of experience with the DHHS to prove it. “It’s very different, but the skills you need are the same. And so, when

At the time, Fleming had not yet met Morse and questioned him through the front door’s intercom. According to Clark, “[Fleming] said ‘Hello, can I help you?’ [Morse responded,] ‘Yes, can I come in please?’ ‘Well, who are you?’ ‘The Superintendent?’ She hadn’t met Dr. Morse yet... but, you know, she sure passed that test.”

For Fleming, there is also moral that comes with enforcing the rules bestowed on her by the ORHS administration. “I’m a rule follower by nature, and... I figure that, as I’ve gone through my work life... I never wanted to hold others accountable if I wasn’t being accountable. So, same goes with the door. We all need to be safe.”

“I knew she would have the skills to handle the job.”

she described the work that she did, all of the paperwork that goes along with the forms that you have to fill out, and all of that kind of stuff, I knew she would have the skills to handle the job. That was a very important part for me,” said Noe.

Although ORHS is Fleming’s first time working directly at a school, she is no stranger to working with teenagers, and that was also a key factor in her hiring. Fleming has her own kids, has coached a girls’ travel basketball team called the ‘Bearcats,’ and has experience working with athletic boosters and fundraising for school sports at Noble High School in North Berwick, Maine. For Noe, that experience, compounded with Fleming’s prior work experience, made her the right choice.

Fleming is also learning quickly in her position in the front office, embracing her new role as the ‘face of ORHS.’ “Everybody makes mistakes when you first start learning something. But she just takes it all in stride and says, ‘Ope- Yep- I missed that; I’ll get that next time,’ but then she does. She makes sure whatever the thing was missed that one time, she does it the next time,” said Noe.

Staff also enjoy working with Fleming. Christine Clark, Administrative Assistant for Noe, said, “She’s really funny,” and, “I enjoy working with her because we just have fun in the office, and... she does what she needs to do... but she enjoys interacting with everybody, she enjoys interacting with kids, and it’s fun working with someone like that.” When I asked Clark for the worst part about working with Fleming, she replied, “I haven’t found one yet.”

I have to agree with Clark; Fleming does have a good sense of humor. I asked Fleming a couple of fun questions at the end of my first interview with her, and to my question of ‘If you were an animal, what animal would you be?’ she responded, “I guess the rightful answer is that I would like to be a bobcat, but if I couldn’t be a bobcat, I’d probably be a squirrel.”

However, there are some cases where students are not too fond of Fleming. Fleming has been strict in holding students accountable for their actions regarding entering and exiting the building. These things, for students, often involve signing in and out of the building using their IDs during downtime, as well as just being in the building when and where they are supposed to be at any given time, but Fleming is the one who has to tell them that they have to follow the rules.

This enforcement is rooted in student safety. Clark says Fleming once told her, “Heaven forbid, if anything were ever to happen, I would hate to think that there was something I could’ve done to prevent it. So, I will check everybody going through that door.”

On the first day of school, Fleming even stopped Dr. James Morse, Superintendent of Oyster River, from entering the building.

To end my follow-up interview, I asked Fleming for one thing she would like to tell students. She said that she loves sports, especially basketball, that she loves Disney, and, after a short pause, she laughed and said, “I’m not evil!”

When she eventually leaves ORHS, Fleming hopes to travel the world. When I asked if there was anywhere specific she wanted to go, she said, “no, just all the places I’ve never been, which there are a lot.” For now, though, Fleming is happy to be in her position at ORHS, and she’s excited to continue getting to know students and improving in her role in the front office. From Special Agent to High School Secretary, Colleen Fleming is the new face of ORHS.

M

- Justin Partis





ASK MOR



I'm a freshman who's having trouble adjusting to high school, what should I do?

Sometimes it can be hard being thrown into a big school with kids your age, to people who seem like they're full-blown adults. I remember feeling the pressure of high school when I first started. There were so many new people I had never met and me, being the social person I am, wanted to interact with everyone I could. However, at the same time, I wanted to crawl into a hole, scared of the change high school meant. I remember finding the workload to be a lot, too, at times, and that was hard as someone who had never really struggled in school before. It took some time for me to adjust and get used to the environment, but as I got older, high school got easier. I was taking more classes I liked, which resulted in me doing very well in my classes. I also found a good group of people to surround myself with, while also joining clubs I enjoyed. I got my license, and life started to feel a bit easier. If your freshman year seems hard right now, just know you're not alone. People handle it differently. The person with the biggest smile next to you could be cracking under pressure even if they don't seem like they are. Spoiler alert, that was me. I tried to play it off like I was chill my freshman year, but then I was quickly known as the girl who cried all the time. That was a 'yikes' moment. Be patient with yourself, give yourself some time to adjust, and know that this high school has a lot of fun stuff to offer, even if you haven't found it yet. The upperclassmen also aren't as scary as they seem... except during spirit week.

What do I do if my teacher doesn't like me?

One of the most important things to remember is that teachers are human, too. I know we think that they're giving us that extra book report because they can, or that they made the deadline too short because they can, but they just have to follow guidelines too. They have a certain curriculum that they need to follow for us to learn what they are paid to teach. On top of that, they have personal lives too. They may be having a hard day or going through something that we can't understand. Cut them some slack; teachers are very pleasant people most of the time. Even when they aren't, remember how you may act when you have a bad day. You get moody or grumpy too. Remember that if you feel like a teacher doesn't like you, don't try to be mean back. Two wrongs don't make a right, and kindness is always the easier route. It's also okay to feel like every teacher isn't your cup of tea. The most important thing to remember is to treat them with respect, even if that can seem hard some days. I know there have been times I have stressed about whether a teacher liked me, and I wanted to do everything in my power to impress them. Don't overthink it and do your best to make a good impression and be the awesome student so many of us are.

How do I tell the girl I like that I have a crush on her? We're guy and girl friends, but I want to be more.

As someone who is a girl, I can say most of the time, honesty is the best policy. I would much rather a guy come and tell me straight up he likes me, rather than beating around the bush or avoiding me in order to avoid his feelings. Most of the time, if two people spend a lot of time together, they can become close enough and start a relationship, and that can be super beneficial. This is how some of my relationships have started, and I can say for sure, I have felt a lot more comfortable around those people in a relationship, because we already got over all the awkward small talk while being friends. We had already established a deep connection, and it made things go smoother. However, this may not always be the case. If you confess your feelings and she doesn't like you back, it'll hurt in the moment, but it does not mean you have to stop being friends. It may feel a little awkward at first, but I promise you, it's a small blip in what could be years of friendship. At the end of the day, don't overthink it. Read the signs she may be sending you and act accordingly.

How do I handle college admissions?

If you're planning on going to college, it's a crazy process. Take it from me because I'm currently going through it! I have been doing lots of work to make sure I pick the right school, making sure my applications are on the right track, recommendation letters, and so much more! While handling the college application process can be intense, think about how worth it is going to be when you open that acceptance letter to your dream school! One way I've handled the craziness is by making checklists for each thing I need to have done. This list includes making sure my Scoir profile is all done, signing up for Common App, reaching out to a teacher, etc. If you're wondering if you're too young to get started for all this, I promise you're not. Obviously, don't apply to college yet if you're still a freshman, but start researching schools you may like, or majors you may be interested in! It's never too early to have a good idea of what you want to do and where so when you start the process, it's a piece of cake! I would also recommend making sure you have teachers in mind who may be good to write your recommendation letters. I promise you, this process is stressful now, but worth it in the long run!

THE SEQUEL:

Asking Teachers Questions



“BORING?! You just dissed him!”

“Well we could watch the patriot games together...”



WHO SAID WHAT?

**Watch THE SEQUEL to
find out...**

- Mia Boyd & Sarah Laliberte



“She is good for banter, let me tell you...
but I don't know if she could like effec-
tively hunt coconut crabs with me...”



“I was literally setting up for the
shot, and my brother comes up be-
hind me, and just goes WABOOSH.
Fully. And it was fully pantsed...”



How Do Cross Country Traditions Run?

The sky is dark, and a group of athletes run around a field on UNH campus, sneaking behind trees, calling for their teammates, and trying not to get tagged by the other team. Everyone is smiling and laughing, enjoying their time with the rest of the team. The Oyster River cross-country team is playing capture the flag the night after a long meet, one of the many traditions within the team.



*The varsity girls after winning states last year
photo credit: Hazel Stasko*

The Oyster River cross-country team has undergone many major changes since COVID, like the boys' and girls' teams combining, and the team receiving a new coach. All these changes have created a shift in the team's culture, which has caused many of the old traditions to be lost or to evolve into something new, something that is slowly being welcomed by the teams' athletes.

This year, the Oyster River cross-country team became co-ed. Most of the runners see this as beneficial and think that it is improving the culture of the team. Many cross-country athletes in the past have liked to look at both boys and girls as one big team, and they think that bringing the boys and girls together has really improved the culture. Henry Hagen ('23), one of the boys' captains, has noticed this. "I think the team being co-ed is great because we really are one cross-country team."

Nicole Toye, one of the two co-coaches for the team, has also been enjoying seeing the guys and girls getting



*The boys team running one of their traditional chants
photo credit: Madelyn Marthouse*

along. "On the bus [to the meets] my past three years it was always like 'girls get the front and boys get the back,' and it was always split up and now it's like nobody asks, they just all sit co-ed."

One thing expected from combining the boys' and girls' teams was that the teams would have to adopt traditions for the full group. Toye has seen how some of the athletes are less than happy about that. "I know from the girls' perspective, some of the traditions they like to do, they want to keep to themselves."

Kelly Zhang ('23), one of the girls' team captains, is an athlete who doesn't mind sharing traditions. "I really like how we're coming together as one Oyster River cross-country team instead of boys' team and girls' team." She has noticed that the culture this year seems more positive and tight knit and places part of that on the combination of teams.

The team may be co-ed this year, but there is still a separation. This year the team was split into two different groups. The A group consists of the varsity and faster JV athletes, and the B group is everyone else. This caused a big divide in the team, and many athletes think it is affecting many of the team traditions. Joey Hannon ('24), who's been on the team for three years, has noticed how the team is divided. "I feel like it's gone from the boys are a team and the girls are a team, to varsity is a team and JV is a team." Hannon thinks that the team divide is the reason some of the traditions are starting to go away. "Some of it is that the team is divided into entirely different schedules"

Hagen has also noticed how the team seems divided into two separate parts this year and thinks the best way to bring the A and B together is at spags. "Just making sure people feel comfortable and welcome at spags is a huge part of it."

Toye has observed how the team is divided this year but thinks her job as a coach is to help the athletes improve and not as much to make traditions happen. "I think to

kind of bring the team together is really something that I look to the captains and the upperclassmen to do.”

The A and B group is causing some separation between the team and the traditions, but the team is still managing to hold some of these customs. Before COVID and starting again this year, the team practiced many important bonding opportunities. Some of these include spags (spaghetti dinners) before every meet, capture the flag, which is played after almost every meet, and “secret bobcat” (a girls team tradition), where everyone on the team has to give a random person on the team a secret gift with a note.

Nick Ricciardi, the new co-coach, mentions how it would be fun, although sort of cheesy, to include the boys in secret bobcat as well.

Zhang explains how the spags typically work. “At spags we just generally do silly stuff, so there’s not really any specific traditions tied to it, just whatever happens at the spag happens.”

During COVID, many of the original cross-country traditions weren’t allowed, like the spags and capture the flag. However, now that all the COVID restrictions have been lifted, the team can participate in all the previous traditions. The question now is whether the team should lose any potentially negative traditions. One thing often debated about is whether traditions are always healthy for a

team. Ricciardi thinks traditions are beneficial. “If they’re healthy and people are on board with them, and not because they feel like they have to be.”

Hagen feels similarly and thinks that, for a tradition, everybody should be willing to do it and enjoy it. “If a tradition is making people uncomfortable, or something that isn’t really helping the team culture then it doesn’t need to be part of the team.”

The newest cross-country “tradition” is to work out with the whole team before school once a

week. Toye thinks the team members have a love-hate relationship with this new “tradition” but knows it’s beneficial for the whole team. “I think having that camaraderie of getting up when it’s dark and all working out together and knowing that you’re up before probably all your competitors and doing a workout as a team, I think there’s definitely value in that.”

This year, like most other years, the Oyster River cross-country team has many new athletes and traditions, but everyone on the team is looking forward to the new direction the team is going. Hagen is confident the direction the team is going is positive. “I really am excited to see what the team becomes.” **M**

- Micah Bessette



2022 Cross Country Team
photo credit: Madelyn Marthouse

Setting the Standards After COVID-19: What Impact Will It Have on Future Generations?



The 2022-2023 school year is the official mark of the first “normal” year since COVID-19 struck back in March 2020. But with all this time away, how will school spirit and traditions return as we adjust to this new normal?

Since COVID-19 exploded throughout the world, the standard high school traditions and expectations have been put on hold, be-

think a true pep rally would be nice, where it's more about bringing everyone together than necessarily focused on the different classes.” Ricciardi feels that while it can be fun to divide the classes by the designated white for freshmen and juniors, and blue for sophomores and seniors, it is yet another way that classes are easily divided on pep rally day.

“It’s not about being against everyone else, or making underclassmen feel inferior, but I believe there is a fun competitive nature that goes along with school spirit.”

ing replaced with remote learning, social distancing, masks, and much more. Coming back from this adjusted experience, Oyster River High School students are struggling to find some of that sense of normalcy, looking to revive the old spirit and traditions at ORHS, while hoping to improve the overall unity of the school community.

A significant message being pushed by staff this year is the concept of cheering for, and not against. Mark Milliken, an Assistant Principal at ORHS, feels strongly about this, wanting to bring the school together, not divide it by each grade. “It is a re-adjustment, but it is also a chance to start over, focusing on that big message of cheering not against each other, but for each other to show spirit for our entire school.”

Other staff members feel similarly to Milliken about this issue, especially when looking at how Oyster River runs the pep rally each year. Nick Ricciardi, the culinary teacher at ORHS, said, “I

Amalia Trump ('26), a current freshman at ORHS, agrees with this sentiment, feeling that the most important part of school spirit is allowing the whole school to come together as one. “Whether it's through going to sports games or participating in spirit week activities, I think it's really important to be a part of because it helps to bring our community together.”



I believe there is a fun competitive nature that goes along with school spirit.”

On the other hand, Waverly Oake-Libow ('23), a current senior at ORHS, believes that a small amount of class competition is good for a school community, as it allows the individual classes to bond and come together, which creates a stronger community overall. She said, “I think that you can find unity through competitiveness, and I feel that's what students are trying to show the staff...it's not about being against everyone else, or making underclassmen feel inferior, but

Rebecca Noe, the Principal at ORHS, hopes to bridge the gap between the staff and student opinions concerning class competition, and unity. "It's all about how we can keep what [students] like about [class competition], while making it positive, bringing everyone together at school...I would disagree with those who say freshman [must] experience it as a rite of passage, just because that's something they went through as a freshman. Just because it happened to one class doesn't make it right or positive," said Noe. She hopes to address this issue while making sure everyone still has the components which they enjoy and feel important to them.

This brought the conversation of the definition of school spirit, which Milliken and Noe strongly believe includes both the fun aspects, as well as the aspect of respect within the school. As well as Noe's hope to find balance between fun and respect within class competition, Milliken feels that this has also been an adjustment throughout the classroom environment.

In general, Milliken feels that ORHS is a school which values respect, specifically mutual respect between the staff and students, however, this is something we've slipped away from. He said, "I think while we've lost some of that mutual respect during COVID

if you're more vocal, because nowadays it's only a select group of students who are showing up and fully participating."

Another aspect of this is that many upperclassmen feel that the underclassmen don't know what to do regarding sporting events, which pushes them away from the consideration of attending. Oake-Libow is one of them, stating "The juniors, sophomores, and freshman don't really understand what [sporting events] were all about [before COVID-19], so I think they don't see sports games as events that everyone should go to and are welcome at...I feel like they only go when they know someone playing, instead of going to support the school community."

Overall, staff and students alike feel that if we want to return to "normal" in regard to school spirit and tradition, the best way to do it is lead by example, and to show the underclassmen what ORHS spirit is all about.

Hawkes feels that leading by example is the best way to help the underclassmen learn what ORHS spirit is all about. "Going all out with the most enthusiasm is important so that you can show the underclassmen that you shouldn't take high school too seriously. Going all out for these types of silly events is what makes it fun and really memorable." Hawkes continued by saying, "I think that we

"In general our school is a place where kids are polite, and adults are respected."

with kids not being around other kids and adults, but I think we're coming back from that...in general our school is a place where kids are polite, and adults are respected." Milliken feels it is important to recognize that the spirit and tradition which students are seeking involves the pride and respect which is present at Oyster River.

Another noticeable shift which has been recognized throughout the ORHS community when returning to school this year is the lack of participation and spirit, especially concerning school sporting events.

Chloe Hawkes ('23), who is also a current senior at ORHS, feels that COVID-19 put a damper on school spirit and traditions, specifically attendance and involvement at athletic events. "For athletics, [during COVID-19] people weren't allowed to attend any games, so I feel like the traditions and chants didn't have a chance to be passed down to the lower generations of [ORHS] students."

Along with this, Hawkes feels that showing up to school events has become looked at as embarrassing, as opposed to celebrating a school community. She said, "It feels like you're being judged a bit

can lay the groundwork right now so that within the coming years, it'll be back to normal. We'll be able to use this year as a reintroduction year, showing our spirit and educating the younger grades on what [Oyster River] is all about."

Noe feels similar to Hawkes, stating that seniors truly set the tone for who Oyster River is as a community now, and what ORHS spirit and tradition looks like in the upcoming years. "There's really two parts to it, because there's the fun, silly, energetic part, and the involved community part. When seniors set the tone for what that looks like, I think that starts to build part of that culture which can be added to and adapted for classes to come," said Noe.

Noe hopes that by laying the foundation and reimplementing these expectations after COVID-19, these examples of spirit and tradition can be in practice for many years to come, truly resetting the standard of the Oyster River community. **M**

- Sarah Laliberte

Images courtesy of Madelyn Marthouse



Unified Soccer - Returning Champs



The buzzer sounds, signaling the end of the 2021 Unified Soccer season. The players on the bench flood the field as they celebrate their championship win. Dover players head back to their bench after losing their lead to Oyster River in the second half. As the team arrives back at the school after being escorted by the police for their win, players and partners are already looking forward to next season.

Unified sports have always been popular at ORHS. Whether it is soccer in the fall, basketball in the winter, or volleyball in the spring, the unified roster is always loaded up with partners and players. This fall, the unified soccer team is looking forward to a successful season, however, with a few changes this year.

Although the players and partners on the roster are mostly all returning, this is a new team entering the year. The first substantial change is the new coach, Cam Calato, who will be filling Alex Satterfield's role as head coach. The second change is that this team is coming back to defend the state championship of the 2021 season.

Mitchell Warden ('23) is a big part of the unified program. Averaging multiple goals per game last season, Warden had a significant impact on last year's state championship run. "We have a lot more confidence in the team because [there are] a lot of the same players [as last year]," said Warden who thinks the team can go on another run but that they have to keep pushing. "We got to keep going because it's not going to get easier, it's going to get tougher as we go."

Brian Sealy, the assistant coach of the team, agrees with Warden but adds, "You know, there's always that pressure when you're the defending champs. The teams come out, kind of looking to go after you and they want to be where you were last year." Sealy is excited and thinks that because it is a large group of returning players, they will be able to manage the pressure that they are destined to face.

Calato feels the pressure, especially since his first-year coaching will be after such a successful season. "My first day of

practice I asked, 'how many people [have] played before' and everyone's hands went up... it was a little scary." But Calato appreciates how ready the team is, "this is a group that obviously had success last year and bonded...everybody is super welcoming, and we're off to the races."

Calato also thinks that the team is already prepared and doing the right thing, especially with the 5-1 win against Dover for their first game. When asked what he did as a coach during the Dover game, Calato said, "kind of stay out of [the team's] way a little bit, [they] obviously have good chemistry and some success and know what [they're] doing."

Partner Riley Drapeau ('24), also feels the pressure but thinks it helps the team. "It'll still be good that we have some high expectations." She is excited about the new coach but says he is still learning about unified soccer. "He doesn't know many of the rules so it's definitely a learning experience for him." Drapeau, however, thinks the year will be similar to last year and hopefully play out the same.

Even though the season is a little nerve-racking, the team doesn't seem to be cracking under the pressure, shown in

the 5-1 win against Dover. This win couldn't have been accomplished without Warden's four goals. When asked how it felt, Warden said, "Pretty good, new career high. I didn't think I would have done that. It gave me confidence, more than I had before." Warden hopes to continue playing like this through the season.

The unified team has played a total of three games, about halfway through the season. After a loss against Exeter (9/28/22), the team rallied with a 7-1 win against Londonderry.

The team is hoping this win secured them a spot in playoffs. After last year's playoff run, the team is more than ready to have a repeat. M

"You know, there's always that pressure when you're the defending champs. The teams come out, kind of looking to go after you and they want to be where you were last year."

- Abby Deane

Images courtesy of NHIAA

Feeling tired of reading...?

Check out **Headphones in the Hallway!**

Can you match the song with who was listening?



Brady Luczek ('23)

“Awkward” by SZA



Lucy Picard ('23)

“No More Parties in LA” by Ye
(formerly known as Kanye West)



Clio Grondahl ('23)

“The Whiskey, the Liar, the Thief” by
Patent Pending



Quinn Carlson ('25)

“What’s the Move” by Young Thug
feat. Lil Uzi Vert

**Scan the QR code and
watch for the answers!**



- Libby Davidson & Grace Webb

Healthy Boundaries in Friendships

MOR advises readers that this article includes sensitive topics such as depression, hospitalization, medication, and other mental health struggles.

You do not owe anything to anyone. Ever. You do not owe them your time, your thoughts, your money, or your things. And you absolutely do not owe anybody mental health support.

As high schoolers, we completely engulf ourselves in our social lives, our friendships. We value ourselves based on how many people like us or want to hang out with us. And often, we will go to extreme lengths to feel validated, even putting our own mental health at risk to try and be there for someone else. However, I don't think this is a sustainable lifestyle to live. In my opinion, as students we need to learn that setting boundaries within your friendships is important to your mental health and may even help you be a better friend in the long term.

I wanted to speak with some of my peers at Oyster River High School to broaden my perspective on this topic; I wondered if any felt the way I did. A few students I spoke with felt unsure of how to help their friends, sometimes leading to conflict. Audrey Sigmon ('23) said, "having to support someone, but also having your own life is a difficult thing to manage."

Emily Lahr ('23) shared her experience with conflict that arose within her and my group of friends earlier this year. This conflict was born from a general misunderstanding of what Lahr was going through with her mental health. Her struggles were serious, and my friends and I were unsure of what to do in order to support her. It became apparent quite quickly that we were all overwhelmed with the positions that we were in.

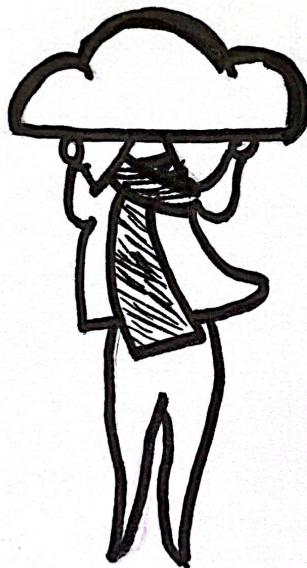
Lahr said, "people that struggle a lot [with their mental health]

them every once in a while, and ignore your problems. I know this isn't the best way to cope, but this is what I look for [when I'm struggling]." Lahr added that she was "begged" to receive professional help. "They said to me, 'you need more help than we can offer, we're not professionals, you need something bigger...' It caused [me to] lash out at them just yelling 'I want support, friends and distractions,'" Lahr said.

From my side of things, I can say that I didn't give Lahr the support that she needed. But was that my fault? How am I, a 17-year-old girl with my own things to worry about, going to take on someone else's issues?

And I know what you're thinking, 'you don't necessarily have to take on someone's issues to support them,' and you're right. You don't. But this is exactly the problem that I, and a lot of other students have. We can't help but take on the issues of our friends, because we care about them, right? There's obviously a lot of empathy involved in friendships and relationships, which can make it hard to not be almost envisioning their situation or feeling their emotions. It can be heavy on someone's shoulders to support a struggling friend. I've felt that weight, and this was the first time that I ever set boundaries in my life when it came to my friend's mental health struggles.

Lahr ended up receiving the help that she needed and says that despite her initial feelings about my friends pushing for her to seek further help with outside resources, she should thank them. "They saved my life," Lahr said. She feels that though her treatment was long, and difficult, it helped, and she needed it. Through treatment, Lahr learned skills which could help her in future situations



"[Friendships] just don't go well until one person starts to learn coping skills."

tend to talk about it a lot... In my friend group, this was triggering [for my friends]. I didn't try to talk about it, it's just what came out of my mouth at the time because it was the only thing I could focus on." Lahr added that, "it's really difficult for both sides. My friends were trying to take space because it was triggering for them, but it was sad for me to see my friends take space [from me] when I was having such a hard time." She was also quite hurt by their suggestions to seek professional help.

"With support I think I mostly looked for distractions from the struggles I was going through. When you're dealing with mental health issues that are so severe, it's nice to just be distracted from

where her mental health may be declining.

She said that "[Friendships] just don't go well until one person starts to learn coping skills." She added that, "We're all just ignorant teenagers with not enough mental health education." But truth be told, neither of us came to those conclusions quickly. Or rather, we didn't talk about it for a long time. After nearly eight years of friendship, Lahr and I went nearly seven months without communicating, due to the fact that we misinterpreted a lot of bad blood on both ends. We understood what had happened, and we both understood how we hurt each other, but we didn't understand why it happened, and that's because we didn't communicate things

with one another. As I mentioned, this conflict sprung from my friends and I not understanding how to support Lahr, and frankly, a lot of us feeling too burnt out to do so. Lahr lashing out at us for this only pushed us away further, and once she went to residential treatment, we didn't have contact with her. Not being able to smooth those things over at the time of the conflict meant that months later, when Lahr returned, we would still assume she had meant some of the things she said. Hence the whole not talking for seven months.

As much as it hurt both of us, I would've spiraled alongside Lahr had I not separated myself. I recognized quickly after Lahr left that I ultimately made the right decisions, even if there were times where I didn't execute things in the best way. At the end of the day what I personally needed was space and time, and I'm glad that I

"It's totally fair to have boundaries [regarding mental health]. How could you possibly help someone else if you have not learned to live with your own struggles?"

set those boundaries when I did. I think my mental health would have declined quite a bit had I not done so.

Though we all sat on these bad feelings for a long time, which forced me to reflect on what had happened. I could recognize that all conflict was a two-way street, that maybe we all could have done things differently. This helped me realize that reflection may be the most important thing in order to maintain good mental health, and healthy relationships. This conflict was hard on everyone involved, but truth be told, had I not experienced these things, I don't think I would be in a position where I felt it was important to remind my peers that it's okay to prioritize their own mental health.

Going through all of this made it apparent to me that there was a lot of learning we all had to do. Not only do we need to learn how to be there for our friends, but we need to learn how to put ourselves first, as selfish as that seems. We spend so much time catering to other people, being taught that we need to put others first, when that's just not a sustainable way to live.

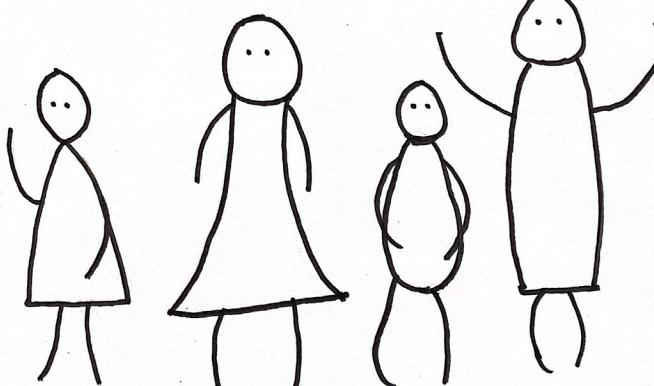
Recently, Lahr and I sat down with the counseling director, Shannon Caron. Caron mediated a conversation between the two of us, where we finally talked about what happened. Finding resolution has helped me to understand what to do differently next time I am in a similar situation.

I decided to speak with Caron further about the counselors' roles, and what they can do to help mediate conflicts which may have arisen from students' struggles with setting boundaries. Regarding the morality behind boundaries, Caron said that "I think it's absolutely fair to set boundaries with a struggling friend. It's important for anyone to be protective of their own mental health, and we can only offer support to the extent that we feel comfortable and healthy in our own skin... There's only so far we can push the limits of ourselves before it becomes unhealthy for us." She mentioned that there is a good number of students who visit counsel-

ing when they feel concerned about their friends. While this is not something they track data on, it is a pressing issue. As far as support from our counselors on issues like this, Caron said that "the counseling department can offer that outside perspective if there is a challenging friendship dynamic happening." She added that, "I think it takes very mature conversations to be able to feel comfortable about what you are and aren't able to help a friend with, and that's difficult."

But ultimately, we have a million things going on at any given point as teenagers. Sometimes, trying to balance someone's well-being on top of everything else you have going on in your life is harmful to you. Your own life, and your mental health should always be your priority.

Jason Baker, a counselor at ORHS said, "it's totally fair to have



boundaries [regarding mental health]. How could you possibly help someone else if you have not learned to live with your own struggles?"

Allowing yourself the time and space to deal with your own issues is one of the most important pieces of maintaining healthy relationships. Setting boundaries starts with yourself and treating the people in your life the way you would want to be treated.

Sigmon spoke on the issue of setting boundaries, saying that, "sometimes there's a fear that you're going to be dumping too much on someone, so I feel like people almost set boundaries

within themselves to not do that... It's known that you only [give] people what you think they can handle." She added that, "the more you dump onto someone, the more overwhelmed they can get... Having hard feelings [told to] you [by] someone else can almost make you feel them too... You turn to that same place."

There is a lot at risk when you vent too much to someone who is not ready for that-- it can put too much responsibility on that person, and like Sigmon said, can trigger issues within that person. "You almost make their feelings your own," said Lucy Picard ('23), another student at ORHS.

Though there are often a lot of questions regarding how your friend may handle you setting those boundaries. For instance, what if my friend is offended at what I have to say? What if it makes other people in our friend group mad at me? Dalva Cheney ('23), said, "If setting those boundaries with your friends bothers them then they probably aren't good friends." She went on to say, "not setting boundaries like that is going to impact friendships, because if you don't let them know that something is bothering you, then resentment builds up and things kind of blow [up] eventually."

There is often a lot of fear from teenagers regarding setting boundaries with their friends when talking about mental health. Mallory Desantis ('25) said, "I struggle setting those boundaries, and with what my friends would think of me if I set them." This ties

back to the main point I made at the beginning of this article; as teenagers our social lives completely control our every action, even if it may hurt us.

Picard said, "you risk losing the friendship if you [set boundaries] like that." While this is an extreme viewpoint, it's a very real one as well.

For some, they are unsure of how to set boundaries because they know that their friend needs more help than they can offer, but they do not know how to approach that. Sigmon said, "I'm not going to go and tell their mom, [that they are struggling] cause there's a fear there. In these kinds of situations, your friends don't want you going to their parents, because they might not see that [help] is what they need." She added that, "you want so badly to help but there's some [topics] where you feel so helpless and like you can't do anything." We've all been there before. So, what do you do next if you find yourself in that position again? I think that in these cases, the counseling department at ORHS is a great resource.

Our counselors could help you to set those boundaries by giving simple advice, or if needed, they can connect your friend with out-

up to begin with. I understand that it is stressful, I've been there, but there's also ways to go about lifting some of that weight off your shoulders.

Simply put, there's nothing wrong with telling your friend that you aren't in the right headspace to listen to their vent. You might say something like, "hey, I do sympathize with what you're going through, and you do have my support, but I'm not exactly in a position to be the person that you need right now."

Though I can admit that it gets difficult when your friends' mental health situations get dangerous. Typically, we should be looking for the signs of struggling mental health. If someone's personality seems to have changed a bit, they seem agitated, have withdrawn from friends or activities they enjoy, have neglected hygiene practices, or if they express feelings of hopelessness -- even in the form of "jokes" -- their mental health situation may be more serious. These signs, coupled with an increase in venting, or conversations revolving around poor mental health may be an indicator that the situation is past the point of you being able to help your friend on your own.

"Some issues become too intense and it comes to a point that you really want to help your friend, you really care about this person, but then you start to realize that maybe the help they need is beyond what you're able to give... It impacts yourself."

side help. The good thing about this is that it can be done anonymously. Your friend doesn't need to know that it was you who took the first step to get them help, and you can feel relief knowing that you did all the right things. Caron said that, "Some issues become too intense and it comes to a point that you really want to help your friend, you really care about this person, but then you start to realize that maybe the help they need is beyond what you're able to give... It impacts yourself."

Baker said, "I wish I could give you an exact number [of students who have trouble setting boundaries], but that is easily the most pressing thing we see here." Hearing this validated a lot of feelings for me, and I hope it does for some of you as well. Baker went on to talk about how there are a multitude of reasons someone may become triggered by someone else's situation, and that there is nothing wrong with that. He even talked about how students visit the on-call counselor when their friends' struggles may bring up issues of their own.

There are multiple instances in which you might need to set boundaries regarding mental health within your interpersonal relationships. For example, a friend may text you quite frequently to vent, or maybe your conversations seem to always end in you discussing their struggles. This may leave you feeling overwhelmed, and you may not even notice it. In some cases, you may even have a friend who is struggling past the point of your limited abilities to support, they may even be in danger. What do you do?

If you feel like a dumping ground for your friends' struggles, first keep in mind that your friend feels safe with you, and that mental health is a very vulnerable topic. They are strong for even speaking

But don't forget about yourself, your own needs and mental health. These are not typically the kinds of situations in which people are considering their own feelings and well-being. -- though they should be. When those close to us struggle, we tend to feel like we're struggling with them. As my peers mentioned, you may feel triggered by what your friend is going through, but they may not be aware of that. Reflecting on your own mental health and capabilities is integral to being able to support a struggling friend.

Something to always keep in mind is that you might not know someone's full story. You might not know where they came from, the things they have experienced, or even how they are feeling in that very moment. But what you do know for sure is yourself, your limits, and the things you can currently handle. Why is this important? From personal experience, I've found that reflecting on my own mental health and well-being is an important aspect of remaining a mentally sound and supportive friend. If you are not aware of what you are going through, and where you are currently at, you would not be capable of giving appropriate support to those around you who need it.

I hope that you take at least one thing from this article, or that maybe it helped you reflect on some of your own relationships. But I think we all need to try to remind ourselves every day that we live for ourselves, not for anyone else. There is nothing wrong with being emotionally "selfish" by closing yourself off to things which feel like they drag you down. Setting boundaries within your relationships will allow you to grow more as a person, and in turn be a better friend to those around you. **M**

- Ava Gruner

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The advertisement features a top section with three clothing items: a grey t-shirt on a hanger, a grey skirt, and a pair of grey pants. Below this is the logo for "ECHO" in large, bold, sans-serif letters, with "thrift shop" written in a smaller, cursive script below it. Underneath the logo is the text "with Friends in Action".

The bottom section contains a stylized illustration of a storefront. The top part of the building has a wavy pattern. A black sign with white text reads "THRIFT DEPARTMENT". The windows display various clothing items. One window has a "NEW ARRIVAL" sign above an "Open" sign. Another window has a "SALE" sign and a "50% OFF" sign. The overall style is hand-drawn and artistic.

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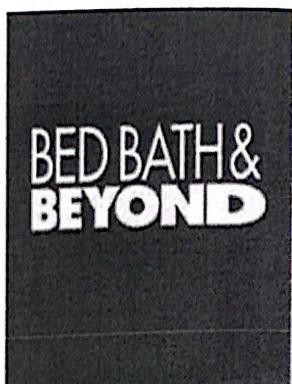
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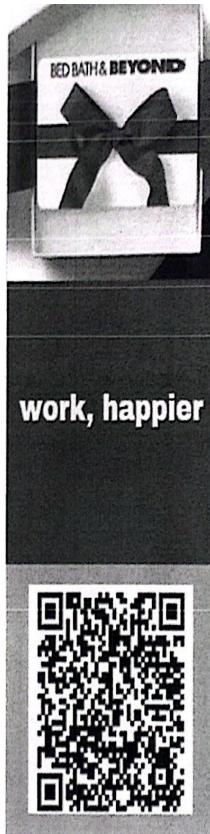
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2022-2023

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2022-2023 Senior Privilege Information and Guidelines

In order to provide senior students with the privilege of monitored freedom, teach valuable skills such as time management and personal responsibility, as well as to recognize and reward students for high performance in academics and citizenship, Oyster River High School offers Senior Privilege.

Privilege is granted by parents/guardians and Oyster River High School Administration to eligible senior students. With these privileges are allowed off campus during unassigned time and lunch only (this is different from Late Dismissal permission).

Ability Requirements:

• Overall GPA:

• No F's or D's

• Overall Grade Average:

• Overall Grade Average: 2.8 or C- (70%) or better in all courses for the previous quarter

• Discipline record: No suspensions or detentions in previous quarter.

• Character: Recommendation from an Oyster River High School staff member based on the 21st Century Learning

• Activities / Responsibilities: Activities that include the following:

• Opportunities to passively and positively and productively in our local and global communities

• Opportunities to do so as well

• Encourages others to do so as well

• Demonstrates ethical behavior

• Personal and community health and wellness

• Initiates awareness of and promotes ethical and balanced

• Technology

• Who do not qualify at the beginning of the quarter may reapply after progress reports.

• Be revoked under the following circumstances:

• Quarter grades do not meet the academic standards required for reinstatement of Senior Privilege. (Students may re-apply for reinstatement of Senior Privilege.)

• Academic probation: A new form of action: length of revocation will vary based on offense.

• Tardy Issues

• Revocation through the main office only.

• Revocation/suspend Senior Privilege (school-wide or individual) at their disciplinary and not eligible for Senior Privilege.

• Appointments (i.e. doctor's and/or dentist appointments) are still required to go through the front office, even if the appointment is during their unassigned period (this includes school).

• All exits must be made through the main office only.

• Any violation of Senior Privilege may result in loss of Senior Privilege.

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